

82

'Twas Right to Marry him ;
OR, THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
Miss PETWORTH.

VOL I.

Two Right to Mary Ann;



H I S

OF

Mrs PETWORTH.

VOL I

'Twas Right to Marry him ;
OR, THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
Miss PETWORTH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXXIV.



T O

Messrs. F. and J. NOBLE.

W——, Yorkshire, June 25, 1773.

Gentlemen,

IN consequence of what I hinted to you, when I put my little piece, entitled *'Twas Wrong to Marry him*, into your hands; I now send you a companion to it, which I call *'Twas Right to Marry him*; and this composition, I hope, will not be thought less moral than the preceding one. I can, indeed, with truth declare, that it is my intention, in every piece which I write in this way, to amuse the mind, and to mend the heart at the same time; though I would, certainly, rather chuse to be ranked with the *dull*, than classed with the *dangerous novel writers of the age*.

In

In the volumes which I now offer to your inspection, I have had the correction of some female errors principally in my view, and cannot help sincerely wishing, that those young ladies who feel themselves sufficiently prepossessed in favour of their lovers, to throw themselves out of the protection of their parents or their guardians, will give them an attentive perusal. By reflecting seriously upon the consequences with which their clandestine proceedings *may* be attended, they will, perhaps, be deterred from putting themselves into the power of men who make their addresses to them before their *hands* as well as their *hearts* are united.

After all, however, satisfied as I am with the integrity of my own intentions, I am almost afraid of being severely handled as an author, since the *two*
novels

novels which occasioned your *two ap-
peals* to the public were so unfairly con-
demned.* The flashing satirist,† in-
deed, who boldly asserted that those
performances were calculated *to debauch
all those minds which are already unde-
bauched*, could not support that hardy
assertion by pointing out any immoral
passages: but as too many readers, of
all kinds, are apt to be swayed by ge-
neral characters of books, and to be
strongly prejudiced against those which
are reprobated by a critical Drawcansir
in a monthly magazine, your appeals
were justly provoked; and it is to be
hoped, at least by all authors, that

* The novels here referred to are *The Way
to Lose him*, and *The Way to Please him*. The ap-
peals are printed at the end of a work entitled
The Self-deceived; or, the History of Lord Byron.

† The frontless editor of the London Maga-
zine.

they

(iv)

they will induce every man, who sees a book advertised in his favourite walk of literature, to read that book without consulting any printed opinions of it ; to read it, in short, with a mind totally unbiassed.

Encouraged by such hopes, I venture to launch this *second* trifle into the literary world, “ with all its imperfections on its head.” I am, however, still more encouraged by the consciousness of not having written a line in it with an intention to promote the *spread* of immorality—a consolation which the most petulant and perverting critic cannot take away.

I am, yours, &c.

The AUTHOR.

'Twas Right to Marry him ;

Or, the HISTORY of

Miss PETWORTH.

LETTER I.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

INDEED, my dear Kitty, my patience is almost exhausted. Sir Thomas grows intollerable. What right has he to suppose that I must be obliged to marry *him*, a man above twice as old as I am, because my father left me to his care till I was of

VOL. I.

B

age,

2 THE HISTORY OF

age, or till I married? I could dispense, however, with the great disparity between our years, were he suitable to me in every other respect: if he was good-natured, and if his taste was similar to mine, his age might be overlooked. I might, perhaps, like a younger man better; yet there are some middle-aged men who are exceedingly agreeable; there are certainly many young ones odious beyond expression. It is not, therefore, Sir Thomas's age, merely, which occasions my opposition to his wishes: no—my principal objections are to his person, and to his manners; the former is disgusting; the latter are not to be endured. I never could bear him when I was quite a child: though not reckoned a peevish chit, I always screamed at the sight of Sir Thomas Plummer. I wonder why my father chose him from among his numerous

MISS PETWORTH. 3

merous acquaintance, for my guardian, many of whom must have surely been as agreeable as him, and as deserving. I cannot think it much to his honour to be always teasing me with his passion, and threatening to refuse the payment of my fortune if I marry any other man. But let me not condemn my father---I was too young when I lost him, to be acquainted with the motives by which he was induced to leave me under Sir Thomas's care; if my dear father was now alive, *he* would not oblige me, I dare say, to marry a man whom I cannot love. It is impossible for me, I think, ever to like Sir Thomas; there is something very gross in his behaviour, and he is perpetually taking freedoms which would be insufferable in a young lover, even in a *husband*, in *my* opinion; for, certainly, my dear, without a great deal of *delicacy* af-

4 THE HISTORY OF

ter marriage, the affection and esteem necessary to make such a union desirable cannot be preserved. I may be wrong, for I am both young and ignorant; Sir Thomas often tells me that I am of too refined a way of thinking to be happy: but I differ from him extremely, and till I see very substantial reasons for an alteration of my sentiments, I shall undoubtedly retain them. In the mean time, tell me, my amiable friend, when you imagine you shall be at Lord Hampton's; I long to see *you* as much as you, I suppose, long to see London. I very well remember that my curiosity was quite equal to yours when we were at school together at York: though I am ashamed to say that my curiosity made me leave my dear Kitty with less regret than I should otherwise have done. I hope such a curiosity is natural to all girls bred up at a distance
from

MISS PETWORTH. 5

from the capital, for I should be sorry to have my friendship suspected by this free confession. I feel my heart glowing with friendship, though it is as cold as ice to love; at present, at least; and Sir Thomas will never be the man to inspire it with a tender passion. Poor man! he is really an object of pity, as he makes himself very ridiculous. I am always more inclined to pity people than to laugh at them. Let me know the moment you arrive, and I will fly to assure you how sincerely I am

ever yours,

HEBE PETWORTH.

B3

LET.

6 THE HISTORY OF

LETTER II.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

Grosvenor-Square.

I Arrived here last night, my dear Hebe. My departure from the country was so sudden that I had no time to inform you of it. Lord Hampton being acquainted with a Mrs. Brudenel, who was on her return from Scarborough, and believing that he could trust me with *her*, better than with any other person, begged her to take me under her protection. We arrived *late* last night, or you would have heard from me immediately, according to your desire. I embrace this first opportunity, waiting for a summons to breakfast, to intreat you to favour me with your company as soon as you are at

MISS PETWORTH. 7

at leisure. *My guardian seems to be of a very different complexion from yours.*

I was going to fold up my letter, but the servant telling me that my Lord would be glad to see me at breakfast, I would not make him wait; I went down directly.

He made an apology for receiving me alone—"Lady Hampton," added he, "keeps late hours, and seldom breakfasts any where but in her dressing-room. I must take the liberty, therefore, to desire you to do the honours of the tea-table."

While he was speaking the few last words he handed me to my seat. I shall never, I think, have reason to complain of want of politeness in my guardian; he appears to be the best bred man in the world: his manners are

8 THE HISTORY OF

charmingly elegant ; his person is commanding ; he is tall, and genteelly formed, and every pleasing passion is expressed in his open countenance. He acquits himself upon every occasion with the most graceful ease. I have not seen enough of my Lady to form any judgment of *her* ; she seems to be genteel ; she has, certainly, been very handsome ; she has only—at eight and twenty---the *remains* of a fine face.

When Mrs. Brudenel informed me of her Ladyship's age, I told her that I imagined London was an unwholesome place, as people changed so early in life. She laughed at me exceedingly for the simplicity of my observation. " An immoderate pursuit after pleasure," said she, " will injure the most beautiful woman's person, and soon rob *youth* of its blooming appearance."

I blushed

MISS PETWORTH. 9

I blushed at my ignorance—She was certainly right, and I shall frequently, I imagine, find myself disconcerted. Come then, my dear Hebe, and teach me the manners of the world, to which I am an utter stranger: I have not, indeed, seen much of it yet, as Mr. Brown, to whose house I went when I left school, you know, lived in too retired a way to give me any information of that kind. In hopes of seeing you soon, I am, ever yours, most affectionately,

CATHERINE PERCY.

LETTER III.

MISS PETWORTH to MISS PERCY.

I Seize my pen with pleasure to comply with your request, and will freely tell you what I think of your present situation.

tuation. You are, my dear Kitty, according to all outward appearance, happily placed in Grosvenor-Square. Lord Hampton is, in my opinion, one of the most agreeable men I ever saw. My Lady, perhaps, may be too fond of pleasure, but she behaves with a politeness which is extremely winning. I have been told that she was violently in love with his Lordship, but that *he* had never a strong passion for *her*; that he married her because she was young, handsome, possessed of an ample fortune, and, in no shape, an exceptionable character: he did not then indeed know of her fondness for play, nor did she at the time he married her shew the attachment to it which she has since discovered. 'Tis a pity she is not more domestic, as my Lord appears to be of that turn: but she has all-powerful fashion on her side, and a large fortune to support her
fashion-

MISS PETWORTH. 11

fashionable propensity; she does not, therefore, meet with many people in public who condemn her conduct.

When I came home, I told Sir Thomas how agreeably you was situated, and what a polite, obliging guardian you would find in Lord Hampton.

“He will not be half so indulgent, half so tender as I am, my charmer,” replied the nauseous old man, hugging me so closely that I was afraid of being suffocated, and smelling, at the same time, so dreadfully of tobacco, that I thought I should be quite poisoned before I could get from him: and when I *did* disengage myself from him, I was forced to deluge myself almost with lavender water before I could bear *my own* person, after having been so very near *his*. Surely, my dear, you will not *now* accuse me

12 THE HISTORY OF

of being over nice for rejecting such a lover : but I will think no more of him.

I shall certainly be with you by and by. How obliging was Lord Hampton to invite me to my Lady's rout ! I shall have a good opportunity to see the taste of your whole family. Sir Thomas seemed very loth to let me come ; I was afraid, indeed, he would have issued a *prohibition*. I was actually forced to coax him a little, and allow him a few disgusting freedoms before I could get loose : I have since blamed myself, however, for my concessions of that sort. We ought not, at any time, to make concessions of which we cannot approve, whatever advantages we may derive from them—But as I shall see you soon, I will conclude here, assuring you that I am, as usual,

yours most affectionately,

HEBE PETWORTH.

• L E T.

LETTER IV.

MISS PERCY to MISS PETWORTH.

HOW much am I obliged to you, my dear Hebe, for your company last night! and, indeed, so are many other people; particularly Mr. Euston, who expressed himself in such terms about you that Lord Hampton told him he was far gone; adding, that his heart was quite lost.

“It cannot be lost, my Lord,” replied he, “if Miss Petworth has got it.”

My Lord himself, also, said several handsome things concerning you; but he is so polite and good-natured that it is
a pleasure

14 THE HISTORY OF

a pleasure to see him, and to hear him. As to my Lady, she praised nobody : she was, indeed, so much taken up with her company and her cards, that it was almost impossible for her to take notice of *us*, who could neither be of service to her, nor afford her any entertainment.—But to return to this Mr. Euston. He is really very handsome, and must be very amiable, or he would not be a favourite with my Lord. You cannot imagine how he talked of you. He asked me fifty questions concerning you, many of which I really *could not* answer. He asked me if you was engaged to any gentleman, and when I hesitated about a reply, he then added, almost in the same breath, “ I mean, Madam, has your fair friend “ disposed of that heart, which, if I may “ judge from her lovely countenance, “ must be a valuable one ? ” Now as
this

MISS PETWORTH. 15

this is an affair of which I am entirely ignorant, I could not, possibly, return a satisfactory answer; nor indeed should I have thought it proper, had you trusted me with so important a secret. Mr. Euston, therefore, must find out what he wants to know, himself; he is certainly an agreeable man. He has an elegant person, and his behaviour is truly polite. He has also a very good estate; I mention his *estate last*, because I am well assured that you have not those tormenting passions, ambition or avarice, to gratify; the fortune of your admirer is consequently immaterial. Yet whither am I running? I talk as seriously as if Mr. Euston had actually made a declaration; however, as he is certainly very much pleased with you, a declaration you may not irrationally expect; and if his overtures should prove agreeable or satisfactory to
you,

16 THE HISTORY OF

you, I shall be sincerely glad; they will serve to reconcile me to *routs* of which I have not at present, I confess, a very favourable opinion; and I do not believe that my Lord is more fond of them than I am.

When all the company was gone, and when my Lady was retired, he asked me how I liked the entertainment of the evening.

I told him that I thought the chatting parties were pleasant enough, but that as I did not understand cards I could not tell whether I liked *them* or not; adding that, from the little I had observed, I did not imagine they would afford me any pleasure, as they appeared to me to require more attention and application than they merited: I concluded with telling his

MISS PETWORTH. 17

his Lordship that, if so much attention was necessary, it would be better to bestow it upon something useful.

He seemed quite pleased with my reply; he looked at me with a benevolent smile, and told me I was the best of girls. "If you remain always in this humour," continued he, "you will make an exemplary wife."

I think, Hebe, I shall always endeavour to deserve his Lordship's *approbation*; at least, at present; indeed, I have no desire to recommend myself to any other man; I shall not, therefore, envy you the praises of Mr. Euston; I shall, in spite of all the admiration you *have* received, or *may receive*, continue

your most affectionate

C. PERCY.
LET.

18 THE HISTORY OF

LETTER V.

EDWARD EUSTON, Esq. to
SIR WALTER CAREY, Bart.

I Am just come from the sight of a woman who has made a complete conquest of that heart which would certainly yield sooner or later, you have often said, obdurate as it was, to all-powerful love. In plain English, I was last night at Lady Hampton's *roué*; it could not properly be called *my Lord's*, as he seldom or ever *plays*. There I met with a Miss Petworth, who is one of the finest girls I ever saw. She is of a commanding height; her form is delicate; her features are happily ranged, and her complexion is beautiful; she has also a laughing archness about her, which

MISS PETWORTH. 19

which is very pleasing; with all these charms she has a fortune of ten thousand pounds. Where shall I find a mistress with more attractions? In short, her wit and her beauty combined, have bewitched me; I am sure I can be happy with her; *I think* I could be constant to her. What have I to do then but to render myself agreeable to the lady, and to apply to Sir Thomas, who is her guardian, for his leave to visit her? I am not, however, I confess, fond of asking the consent of the guardian, before I have gained the *ward's*, and indeed I must see her as warmly attached to *me* as I am to *her*, before I can make any proposals. Sir Thomas, finding *her* fortune and *my* estate suitable, may be disposed to join us together without consulting our inclinations; such a proceeding will not do for *me*—I must have every sort of encouragement to induce
me

20 THE HISTORY OF

me to venture upon matrimony at all. In this age of dissipation and licentiousness, indeed, to marry is to run a considerable risque. The difficulty will be how to get an opportunity to become acquainted with Miss Petworth's sentiments, if I do not see her sometimes at Lord Hampton's. She comes there to visit a female friend, a pretty, young, innocent thing enough, who is just arrived out of the country, and appears to be mighty fit, at present, to shine in the unfashionable character of a *good wife*: but she will soon be, in all human probability, corrupted in the situation in which she is placed: for though my Lord lives in as regular a way as any man of *his* rank can do, I have no opinion of my Lady. However, Miss Percy is not the woman with whom I am in love, I have no reason, therefore, to make myself uneasy about *her* situation; yet as
she

MISS PETWORTH. 21

she is intimately connected with Miss Petworth, and as they have entered into a *strict friendship*, if Kitty should be spoilt, Hebe may be in danger. It will not be improper then to inspect, and minutely, the conduct of them both; without such a cautious procedure I may be served as badly as Lord Hampton has been, who doubtless imagined, that his wife's impassioned fondness for him was a sufficient security for her good behaviour; *that* fondness, I believe, principally induced him to marry her. She had, indeed, with her violent attachment to him, person, birth, and fortune to recommend her, yet I am pretty sure that she was not the woman of his choice; that he consented to marry her merely to gratify her inclination for him; an inclination which might have been sufficient, in my opinion, to keep her from running into
any

22 THE HISTORY OF

any of the fashionable follies with that kind of excessive avidity which renders a woman always *ridiculous*; and often makes her appear in a *criminal* light. Lady Hampton's strong inclination for my Lord, has not been able to preserve her against the intoxicating love of *play*. When a woman gives way to a passion for gaming, there is no saying where she will stop; one vice leads to another, and the mind, by gradual deviations from virtue, becomes, at last, as insensible of shame as of danger. My Lord's ward, therefore, Miss Perey, is not, I think, in a situation entirely safe; and if her taste for all kinds of pleasure in this dear town is contagious, a pretty clear case in my humble opinion, Miss Petworth may possibly catch what she may never get rid of as long as she lives. I shall, therefore, be cautious; that is, as cautious as a man violently enamoured

MISS PETWORTH. 23

enamoured *can* be. I am not yet altogether incapable of seeing what is right, and what is wrong, but how soon the power of distinguishing may be taken from me I will not pretend to say ; I fear I have rather too much sensibility about me to be happy myself, or to make the woman I love happy ; and yet though it *has* occasioned and *may* occasion me a great deal of pain I would not change it for the stoical, stupid nature of some people neither. In short, Harry, it is better for us to be contented with ourselves ; vanity, at least, says so ; without *that* *cordial drop* life would not be worth our care. In this way of thinking is, at present, your

E. EUSTON.

L E T.

24 THE HISTORY OF

LETTER VI.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

YOUR raillery about Euston, has been, I believe, prophetic : if so, I shall begin to look upon you as a Sibyl, and consult you with regard to the future events of my life.

I went, yesterday, with Mrs. Buller, to *Christie's* room. The gentleman above-mentioned was there : he joined us immediately, and fell into an easy chit-chat which was by no means disagreeable : that sort of easiness is the best way of commencing an acquaintance, and of keeping it up too. He would attend us home,
and

MISS PETWORTH. 25

and as I dropped Mrs. Buller, proceeded of course, with me, to the very door of Sir Thomas's house; there, in spite of all I could say or do, he persisted in standing and talking to me; asking me when I should be at Lord Hampton's, and begging me to permit him to give me tickets for the concert at *Almack's*. Before I could either disengage myself from him, or get into the house, Sir Thomas's chariot drove up; Sir Thomas, by craning his neck after Euston, who, on *his* appearance, thought proper to leave me, stumbled over the threshold, through haste, and rolled into the house, like an empty hogthead, after me, to ask me a thousand questions about my pretty fellow.

"He is certainly a lover," said he,
"though you will not own it."

VOL I.

C

"I am

26 THE HISTORY OF

"I am very glad," replied I, "that you are so sure he is; I did not know it before, but I think him a very agreeable man."

This speech put him into such a fit of jealous fury that I was afraid he would have beat me. You will be surprised, perhaps, to hear me say that I should not have been sorry if he *had* beaten me; I should then have had an excuse to put myself under the protection of a more worthy man: I do not mean Euston, Kitty, but another guardian, as I am convinced I am not yet quite sedate enough to take care of myself. But to return to *your* suspicions, and Sir Thomas's apprehensions; they remind me of what I have often heard your prudent people say, "Never fill girls heads with notions about

about love and lovers." Really, my dear, I never perceived any thing of the *lover* in Mr. Euston, till you and Sir Thomas talked to me concerning it; but I shall now begin to fancy, when he speaks to me, that his whole frame is agitated on my account; that his eyes languish with affection, and that his voice is tuned to tenderness. Ridiculous! what nonsense! There is indeed so much absurdity mixed with all our ideas of love, and we act with such inconsistency, in so unaccountable a manner, when we are under the dominion of the *gentle passion*, that I have no desire to have any business with it. For a case in point now, as the lawyers say; only think of Lord and Lady Hampton; *she* was, I have been informed, one of the most distinguished *beauties* in town, and fell desperately in love with

C 2

him;

him; and my Lord, is undoubtedly, handsome and genteel, well-bred and sensible; yet they now, after a marriage of only five years, seem to be as indifferent to each other, as if they never had known what love was. Lady Hampton is, however, still a fine woman, and Lord Hampton is a very amiable man. I could name half a dozen more such couples, as cool and as composed; I have not leisure to point them out at present, but they will serve to guard me against a passion of which I have been always afraid. I am resolved to guard against it; this discreet resolution will surely preserve me against all Sir Thomas's attacks, it will also enable me to keep the more formidable Euston at a proper distance. I shall venture with him, for all this, to *Almack's*, and shall be particularly happy to have my dear Kitty of the party; but as it would not be decent,
you

MISS PETWORTH. 29

you know, for us girls to appear in public without a matron, I go under the protection of Mrs. Buller with whom I shall bring you acquainted: she is one of the most agreeable women in the world, and the sincere friend of
your affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER VII.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

WELL, I am glad you do not laugh at me; I confess, I expected not a little of your mirth levelled at me; it is very certain, indeed, that we rapturous fellows *do*, sometimes, appear in a truly ridiculous light, yet I cannot for-

30 THE HISTORY OF

bear venting more raptures. This Petworth is a delicious girl; I met her at *Christie's*; I prevailed on her to accept of tickets for *Abel's* concert; I received her there, waited on her, and attended to her all the evening. She came with a very agreeable widow, and conducted herself with a discretion which has entirely charmed me: but whether I shall ever succeed with her is another point; however, till she behaves in a forbidding manner, I shall, perseveringly, follow her. She was sufficiently lively, yet discovered a sensibility perfectly engaging; she seemed to feel every note of the harmony floating around her, and expressed herself in terms, at once so forcible and so pleasing, that if I had not admired her before, I certainly should have fallen in love with her last night. She

is

MISS PETWORTH. 31

is really very handsome, and she strongly attracted the attention of the male part of the assembly; I, who had the happiness of being near her, was not less delighted with her conversation than with her person: but she checked me so prettily, for not paying more regard to the entertainment of the night, that I was obliged to stand corrected by her. The velocity of my tongue was stopped; but I feasted my eyes by observing the variations in her *speaking features*, adapted to the different strains which the *instruments*, touched in the most masterly manner, emitted. She, undoubtedly, sings and plays with great taste herself; her voice, naturally melodious, must be doubly enchanting by the strength of her expression, in consequence of the exquisiteness of her feelings. I wish, indeed, that the woman I am to marry may have a taste for *some*

32 THE HISTORY OF

of the fine arts, at least, if not all: by such a taste, she will not only be highly entertaining to *me*, but find herself able to fill up many leisure hours innocently, without sighing for routs and ridottos, for Ranelagh, Marybone, and other public places dedicated to *dissipation*; places which do more mischief than the generality of the fair sex are aware of. As pleasure, in some shape or other, is naturally the pursuit of every human being, every *female*, particularly, ought to have her mind, early in life, fixed to something useful as well as entertaining; innocent as well as amusing; that she may not be obliged to have recourse continually to scenes of levity and folly, which must, of course, draw her off from all laudable and advantageous employments. When a woman has a genius for drawing, painting, or music, she has less reason, commonly
less

MISS PETWORTH. 33

less inclination, to fly to such places as those abovementioned for entertainment, as she may be constantly employed, and in the most desirable manner, at home. I have always looked upon a taste for the polite arts, and a relish for literature, as additional senses, which give to those possessed of them inconceivable delight; delight never to be felt by the stupid and illiterate. What an enchanting companion must a woman elegantly accomplished be, to the man whom she can love! Her elegant accomplishments must surely render her capable of the tenderest sensations. Were I but beloved by such a woman I should be the happiest of men. *I am, and always shall be,*

your very sincere friend,

E. EUSTON.

34 THE HISTORY OF

LETTER VIII.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

IT was with the utmost difficulty I obtained leave to go to the concert. Sir Thomas peremptorily refused to consent, and I was determined not to say much to him about it : I only kept him at a great distance the remainder of the day ; that did the business : he became restless, and began to torment me to a very great degree ; yet I would not condescend to humour him. I cannot bear to flatter him, nor would I have him imagine that I can ever submit to be *his*. I am quite shocked, I am absolutely terrified, at the bare idea of it. No---I will never be so mean

mean as to give him the smallest hopes of marrying me; my soul revolts against such a proceeding. Had you but seen him when he flew to me, upon finding that I chose rather to sit and read than to talk to *him*! After having informed me that I should *not* go with Mrs. Buller to *Almack's*, you would have pitied me: no poor dove in the talons of an old hawk was ever more terrified. Breaking from him I ran up stairs and locked myself into my dressing-room, and would not listen to any thing he could say by way of excuse for the grossness of his behaviour. Finding at last that I was inflexible, and that I refused to come down stairs, he told me, through the door, that if I would forgive what was past, and come down and chat with him, I should go to *Almack's* whenever I pleased. I hesitated at first, and then replied, that I *would*

36 THE HISTORY OF

come down, on his promising not to touch me upon any account, nor to talk to me upon any disagreeable subject; to both these conditions he subscribed. I then quitted my apartment, and endeavoured to be good company. Still, however, the nasty old man, notwithstanding all his assurances, snatched my hand several times, and griped it as if he was resolved to dislocate my joints. By these rough proceedings, by grinning hideously in my face, and by lisping out, affectedly, rhapsodies of nonsense, he so disgusted me, that I repented of having left my dressing-room. At length, to my no small joy, some gentlemen interrupted us, and I went up stairs again to dress for the concert. As soon as dinner was over I went to Mrs. Buller's, and she accompanied me to Almack's room. Euston was in waiting there to receive us, and treated me with

MISS PETWORTH. 37

with a respect and with an attention which were, I must allow, very flattering. At the same time, however, let me confess, that his conversation and fine taste in music afforded me more pleasure. I do not know that I ever enjoyed a concert so completely before, as I never conversed with any person, till that evening, who raised my own natural feelings to so high a pitch. I was quite in an extacy, and it was with the utmost difficulty I suppressed sensations, the discovery of which, I thought, might be attended with misconstructions, as my elegant and accomplished companion observed me with scrutinizing eyes, watching my every look and motion with a minuteness of inspection; yet whenever I caught his fine eyes so employed, he threw them down with a charming significance in them, as if he was conscious of having offended me. He
is

38 THE HISTORY OF

is really amiable, but I had better not indulge myself with thinking him so, nor encourage him to believe that I am pleased with him; for should I not be mistaken with regard to the meaning in his looks, it will avail nothing, as Sir Thomas will never consent to my union with him, though he can make no reasonable objection to it. I shall do well, therefore, to think no more about it. But what hope have I then of being released from my present disagreeable situation? Sir Thomas may live these twenty years: 'tis very probable indeed that I shall die before him, in consequence of my vexation on being in the power of such a man.

I hope, my dear Kitty, you are treated in a different manner by Lord Hampton. At least, you are secure, in one respect,
from

MISS PETWORTH. 39

from the greatest torment which *I* feel, as my Lord, by being married, is prevented from declaring himself your lover. How happy should I be to find Sir Thomas so circumstanced as to be deprived of all hopes of being ever united to
your affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER IX.

LORD HAMPTON to JOHN SELWYN, Esq.

YOU have often told me that you are looking round among your acquaintance for a female fit to make a wife. You may give over your search, as I have found one for you. Never was there a girl so amiable, so every-way qualified for
a domestic

40 THE HISTORY OF

a domestic life as Miss Percy, to whom I was left guardian by her late father. She is with *me* at present, but I cannot say that I think my house a proper place for the education of an innocent young creature. This girl, however, is so different from all her sex, that she cannot, I will venture to affirm, be spoilt in any house. My assertion, you will say, is a bold one; and yet I am strongly inclined to believe that I am not mistaken upon this occasion. Miss Percy is very pretty, yet she seems to be entirely ignorant of her charms; she appears not to know that nature has made her handsomer than other women; and so great is her diffidence that she rather discovers a dread of *not* pleasing than any of that consciousness which is so natural to, and so commonly met with in all fine women. A dread of this kind, indeed, has filled her with

MISS PETWORTH. 41

so earnest a desire of obliging that she is perpetually endeavouring to give pleasure, and without any interested views whatever. Her solicitude to please arises merely from the genuine goodness of her temper. There cannot be a better, a more benevolent creature. There is a nameless something in her every look, word, and action, which is alluring beyond expression. Do you think my portrait too flattering? Come and see the original; you will then own that I have but barely done justice to it. When you see Miss Percy's lovely face, you will, most probably, wish to gain her invaluable heart. I can only add that I am

very sincerely yours,

HAMPTON.

L E T.

LETTER X.

Mr. SELWYN to Lord HAMPTON.

I Thank you for your invitation, for your entertainment, but particularly for the sight of that charming girl: charming in every sense of the word. I wished for a moment to tell you what I thought of her, but there was no opportunity; you had rather too much company; all very agreeable people, indeed. Miss Percy's friend, Miss Petworth, is extremely handsome also; she is, I think, a regular *beauty*, and yet, though I am willing to allow her face all the merit to which it is intitled, the amiable Percy's strikes me more. You gave an exceeding just description of the latter, when
you

MISS PETWORTH. 43

you said that she was ignorant of her personal attractions, of her various powers of pleasing which nature has so lavishly bestowed upon her. She charms you, not only without taking any pains, but without having the least intention to be remarkably agreeable; what then must she be when she really wishes, when she *studies* to please? She must then be absolutely irresistible; she is already so in my eyes, though she seemed totally indifferent about me, and only treated me with a general politeness, with the same engaging politeness which is observable in her behaviour to every body. However, while *she* was entirely easy, and unconcerned, *I* was lost in admiration, and found it extremely difficult to suppress feelings of which I was never sensible before that evening. I do not mean to hide them from the amiable object who has inspired them, but I wish first to see
if

44 THE HISTORY OF

if there are any hopes of my addresses being acceptable to her : I shall, therefore, with your permission, be a constant visiter, and take every allowable opportunity to make as deep an impression upon *her* heart as she has made upon *mine*. To be tenderly beloved by so pleasing, so innocent, so engaging a creature—There is luxury in the idea ! If I have no hopes of raising a passion in *her* equal to that which she has raised in *me*, I shall be miserable. I find I love her too sincerely to think of taking a single step which may in the least militate against the happiness of this amiable girl, whose felicity is, I feel, dear to me as my own. Perhaps, I may soon be acquainted with her sentiments ; she appears to be too artless to make any concealment. How valuable will the acquisition of *her* heart be to

your sincere friend,

JOHN SELWYN.

LETTER XI.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

I Have a great deal to say to you, my dear Kitty, but as it is scarce ever possible for me to find you alone, I am obliged to write.

Euston, you see, pursues me, even to Lord Hampton's, and prevents our getting a *tête à tête*. Shall I confess to you, my dear, that I am not displeased with his persisting to follow me wherever I am to be seen without Sir Thomas, nor at his telling me—though I am very sensible that *his* language is the language of most men to most women---that he cannot live without me? I, sometimes, affect

46 THE HISTORY OF

fect not to hear him, sometimes, not to understand him : poor affectation ! How I despise myself for it ! If he is really sincere, ought I to trifle with a heart which loves me ? Yet we must never meet. Sir Thomas will never consent to my union with Euston, though his fortune and character are sufficiently unexceptionable to authorize his pretensions to a woman in circumstances superior to mine. I told him so, as I would not give him false hopes, when I saw him last. He replied, that he should not easily be deterred, by any difficulty, from attempting to gain Sir Thomas's consent, if I would but permit him to ask him for it.

I returned no answer, though he earnestly pressed me ; but he saw, I imagine, that I was not indifferent to him. Men are pretty clear-sighted in such matters, and yet I fancy we see

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MISS PETWORTH. 47

as much as *they* do; I have, at least, discovered that Mr. Selwyn is violently taken with you, Kitty. He is a very agreeable man; you cannot do better than to give him your hand; I know, by experience, that to be under the care of a guardian is not to be in a desirable, in an eligible situation. We should, both of us, I believe, have found ourselves much more happily situated, had heaven graciously spared us our parents till they could have seen us settled agreeably to their own inclinations. Let me advise you, therefore, to listen to Mr. Selwyn of whom I have heard a very high character. He is certainly handsome, and he is as certainly possessed of a fine understanding.

I have much more to add, but I am interrupted: I have but just time to conclude myself

your ever affectionate,
HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER XII.

Miss PERCY to Miss PETWORTH.

YOURS, which I just now received, diverted me exceedingly. What a hurry you are in, my dear Hebe, to dispose of me, the happiest creature, under the care of the best of guardians, while you are irresolute about the disposal of yourself, though you complain of having the worst guardian in the world! Take care of yourself first, Hebe, and then think of *me*. I was never so perfectly satisfied in my life. Lord Hampton is not only exceedingly good to me, but he is the most worthy, the most amiable of men. How considerate, how obliging, indeed, is he to my Lady, who,

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MISS PETWORTH. 49

certainly takes no pains at all to please him ; on the contrary, she does almost every thing that he dislikes : I imagine so, at least, from the advice which he gives me for my conduct in the character of a wife. Lady Hampton spends all the morning—after she is up, I mean—for she does not rise till it is very late—at her toilet ; and my Lord tells me, that the woman who suffers the care of her person to engross the greatest part of her time, which might be better employed, acts very absurdly. He looks upon cards as a kind of gaming, and destructive, not only to the circumstances of those who are addicted to them, but to their persons and their minds : he considers them as particularly pernicious to women, as they are often deprived by them of their winning modesty, and become assuming, noisy and contradictory ;

50 THE HISTORY OF

unfit for any useful employment, unfit, indeed, to make agreeable companions. Women so addicted, he adds, not only mis-spend their time, too valuable to be thrown away, even in trifling, not to mention criminal pursuits, but injure their health, impair their fortune, and sully their reputation. And yet my Lord, though he talks to me in this serious and moralizing manner, never casts any reflections on her Ladyship ; seldom does he articulate her name to me ; but he always treats her with respect and with tenderness when she comes in his way—she returns his tenderness, I really believe, when she is *at leisure*. She was extremely in love with him, I have heard, or he would not have married her ; and I am not in the least surprized at it ; for it must be allowed that he is very handsome, quite accomplished, and thoroughly

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MISS PETWORTH. 51

ly agreeable in conversation. He is master of music, and has read every thing, so that it is impossible to be in his company without being entertained, and improved also. Besides, he has a look and manner which engage every body's attention. I never saw any man who had so fine an address, who was so entirely well-bred. It is astonishing to me that my Lady seems to desire so little of his company: her present behaviour is totally inconsistent with the passion which she formerly discovered for him. I often think what a pity it is that we should be so addicted to a fickleness which must necessarily render us trifling, and unworthy of the serious attention of people of real merit; still more do I wonder that a woman whom my Lord ever loved can be so regardless of him. From what I have said, therefore, of my Lord's person and

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manners,

52 THE HISTORY OF

manners, you may be sure that I cannot be unhappy under his protection, and that I shall not be in a hurry to throw myself out of it, for a man whom I have seen but once or twice, whom I have never thought about, and with whose character I am very little acquainted. I am rather of opinion, Hebe, that I ought to persuade *you* to accept of Mr. Euston; he is a man approved of by all the world, and you confess, yourself, that you have no aversion to him: why then is he to be kept in suspense concerning you?—Why will you not let him apply to Sir Thomas? Indeed, Hebe, you should not suffer him to follow you, if you do not like him. No man, I imagine, would run after a woman who gave him no encouragement. You certainly encourage him though you will not own it; I think I see that you are much pleased with him, and
I really

MISS PETWORTH. 53

I really believe that he sincerely admires you. Now, my dear, I have given *you* pretty much the same advice as you bestowed upon *me*. Mr. Selwyn is, I doubt not, a deserving man ; I am sure I know nothing to the contrary ; so may a hundred men be, without raising any inclination in me to marry them ; besides, I know nothing of the designs you mention, formed by Mr. Selwyn. He is polite and obliging to every body as well as to me. I cannot suppose that every man who is civil to me is, or ought to be reckoned, a lover. I am quite happy in my present situation, and I would not change it to be united to the most accomplished lover in the universe. I am obliged, however, to my dear Hebe, for her kind care of me, and am ever, her sincere

C. PERCY.

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L E T.

LETTER XIII.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

YOU are a sly girl, Kitty ; I never thought you would have turned out such a character. I see how it is with you,*and I see it with concern. You are in love, my dear girl, and do not know it. There would be no harm, however, in the passion, nor in the indulgence of it, were the object of it at liberty to return it, and meant to return it in an honourable manner. You have not considered) who is there in love, indeed, given to consideration ?) that Lord Hampton is married, and that though he and my Lady do not care for each other, *he* ought not, during *her* life, to think of any other woman ; I
do

do not believe, indeed, that he entertains any such injurious designs against *you* or *her*. He has not the least pretence to be in love with *you*: but there are ten thousand reasons for your being in love with *him*. And yet, I question whether you know any thing of the matter yourself. It is quite necessary, however, for you, both on account of your reputation and your peace, that you should be informed of your danger before it is too late, that you may be guarded against it. It was with this view I advised you to listen to Mr. Selwyn, who is really fond of you, and to whom you have been strongly recommended by his Lordship. You may be assured, therefore, that Lord Hampton has no intentions with regard to you, but the most friendly ones; as he could not have pitched upon a man more likely to render you happy

56 THE HISTORY OF

than Mr. Selwyn : a man so much pleased with you at the very first sight, that he determined to make you the most advantageous offers on his being fortunate enough to gain your heart. 'This I have heard in a very authentic way, and consequently have no doubts concerning the truth of it : but do not ask me from what quarter my intelligence came, only take it as the intelligence of a friend, and properly avail yourself of it. In the mean time, *I* shall follow your advice, and the dictates of my own heart, which tell me that I may venture to give Euston leave to apply to Sir Thomas—Let me add that I fear—I am sorry to say so—it will be to no sort of purpose.

I have kept Sir Thomas, lately, at a greater distance than ordinary, by informing him that if he persecutes me with
his

MISS PETWORTH. 57

his disgusting freedoms, I must seek for redress where I know it is to be had : but I have not yet brought myself to acquaint him with the reasons I have to complain of him. I wish to have a fair opportunity to leave him, and to put myself under the protection of a man who can, I think, make me happy, and whom I can sufficiently esteem to reward his tenderness for me with an equality of affection. This man I believe is Euston. I am going to meet him immediately in the Green-Park, and I shall sincerely wish him that success in his application to Sir Thomas which I am afraid to expect from his interview with him. I must endeavour to arm myself against a disappointment.

While I am so employed, do *you* think seriously, my dear, of what I have said

58 THE HISTORY OF

to you, and depend upon my being,
as sincerely as ever,

yours,

H. P.

P. S. Consider a little, Kitty, what advantage the woman gives a man by letting him see his consequence in her eyes; and conceal, if possible, from Lord Hampton, what he ought never to perceive.

LETTER XIV.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

I Am just come from an interview with Miss Petworth, which I had very earnestly solicited, in the Green-Park. I prevailed

MISS PETWORTH. 59

prevailed on her to permit me to wait on Sir Thomas. The dear girl, not only consented, but sighed when she added, that she feared it would be to no purpose. Surely she must be mistaken: if *she* has no objection to my person and behaviour, *he*, I think, cannot have any to my fortune and character, and to the proposals which I am impatient to offer to him. She gave me a hint indeed that he designed to marry her himself; but what will his design avail, if she is determined to reject him? I have no doubts of her rejecting him; this I know, however, I shall be half distracted if I am deprived of her. She improves upon me every hour. She is modest, she is tender, and she is discreet; she has a handsome person too, a solid understanding, and lively temper; need I add, that she is exceedingly dear to

yours, &c.

E. EUSTON.

LETTER XV.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

OH, my Hebe! what a letter have you wrote! What a discovery have you made! What truths have you written! Truths of which I was totally ignorant, till you made me acquainted with them. I was thoroughly sensible, indeed, that I esteemed, that I honoured Lord Hampton; but I did not imagine that I loved him. It is you, my kind friend, my good girl, who have opened my eyes, for which I return you my sincere thanks; and you may be assured I will do every thing in my power to follow your advice, with regard to Lord Hampton: but then you must not ask me,

MISS PETWORTH. 61

me, you must not expect me to accept of Mr. Selwyn, should he make me an offer. I cannot, indeed, my dear, put so great a force upon my inclination. I can strive against what is criminal, what is only indiscreet, and I doubt not but that I shall conquer; yet I cannot think of marrying *one* man, when—I am not able to write what my heart dictates upon this subject—I am afraid I shall never bring myself to love any other man. I can remain as I am without making any farther discoveries of an inclination which nobody has, I hope, seen or suspected except yourself. I am not, however, conscious of having said or done any thing which could lead you into such a suspicion; I thought, indeed, that I was acting the most justifiable part in the world, in admiring, in praising a man, who appeared to me deserving of every

every body's admiration, entitled to every body's praise. I did not imagine that I either spoke or looked improperly ; but I shall, for the future, watch over my every look, word, and action, with particular attention ; and I beg *you* would, from time to time, vigilantly inspect my conduct. If you see me deviating in the least from discretion, let me intreat you to be kind enough to inform me of my smallest deviations, that I may immediately—as I certainly will—use my utmost endeavours to repair my errors. *You*, my good friend, who first perceived my errors, shall assist me in the correction of them ; you shall tell me how far I may venture to go, and when I must stop. You think, perhaps, that you have already said enough, by informing me that this admired man feels nothing particularly in *my* favour. You have, indeed,

MISS PETWORTH. 63

indeed, almost deprived me of my life by telling me so. By that alone, Hebe, I found out that your observations were but too just, yet it has not the effect you supposed it might have. I am not angry, nor offended with Lord Hampton for not loving me, as his loving me would be criminal. On the contrary, I honour, I esteem him a thousand times more for not being guilty of a weakness equal to your poor friend's; or at least for concealing his weakness so nicely as to prevent its being discovered. But *he* has nothing to conceal; he sees nothing in me worthy of his regard. What should he see in me, but something to condemn? He ought to despise a girl who dares to think too tenderly of him, while he is under the most sacred of all engagements. Must not this behaviour of his, then, unavoidably
raise

64 THE HISTORY OF

raise him higher in my esteem? In the esteem of every good and respectable person? And surely, Hebe, I may *esteem* him: though I must not presume to go any farther.—You cannot imagine how my heart sunk within me when I came to these words in your letter, “He has not the least pretence to be in love with *you*, but there are ten thousand reasons for your being in love with *him*.” My face glowed with shame; it still glows. Yet, indeed, my dear Hebe, I have made no intentional disclosure of my inclination; an inclination which ought, certainly, to be concealed with the greatest care. I do not wish to hide it from *you*, but I sincerely wish that *he*, of all people, may be ever unacquainted with it.

You cannot conceive the agitation into which your letter threw me. I am
ashamed

MISS PETWORTH. 65

ashamed to see my Lord. I am afraid to look or to speak, lest I should betray myself; I had a great mind not to have gone down to supper that evening. I pleaded illness, though I abhor all kinds of deceit; however, as I could not always stay above, I thought it better to behave in my usual manner, yet I knew not how to meet his Lordship's eyes. I could not help thinking that he read every secret emotion of my heart, especially as he took notice of my embarrassment, and treated me with a consideration, a gentleness, which but too much encreased it—I dread his discovering the sensations I feel on *his* account; sensations which I wish to stifle, as they ought not to be indulged.

“I am afraid,” said he, “that you are
“not well”—and pressed me to order
whatever

66 THE HISTORY OF

ever was either proper for me, or agreeable to me.

To give a turn to his affectionate behaviour, which overwhelmed me with a softness of which I was never sensible till that moment, I replied, "I am very well."

"Something then lies upon your spirits; and you may, perhaps, give your mind some relief by the communication of it. You are not afraid to trust me, my dear Kitty, I hope. You may very justly look on me as much your friend, as I am your guardian."

What a kind, what a soothing address was this, my dear Hebe! How it went to my heart! I could not speak; I could only sigh.

Looking

MISS PETWORTH. 67

Looking at me with the most affecting smile, he cried, "Are you in love, my dear girl? If you are, my friend Selwyn is, I hope, the man of your choice."

I felt as if I was going to sink into the earth; I wished to be any where but where I was, to hide my face, which glowed like fire—I dared not to lift up my eyes; yet I could not bear to have him so deceived in me, as to think that I was in love with Mr. Selwyn. I therefore hastened to assure him I was not, though I could hardly articulate my words distinctly. Indeed, Hebe, I am very foolish; and yet I should be absolutely stupid, quite blind, were I insensible to the many fine qualities of which Lord Hampton is possessed: but then it is my duty to look upon him only in
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68 THE HISTORY OF

the light of a guardian—I will strive to behold him in no other light—You have been very kind to inform me of an impropriety of which I was not conscious myself. Continue to check me when you see me acting wrong in any shape; do every thing, in short, but desire me to give my hand to Mr. Selwyn—*That* is impossible, I cannot think of *that*.

Yours most affectionately,

C. PERCY.

LETTER XVI.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

I HAVE been with that obstinate fellow Sir Thomas.---My dear girl was right.---She *shall* be mine.---He has absolutely

MISS PETWORTH. 69

solutely refused me, though he could give me no reason in the world for his opposition to my overtures : he only told me, with a ridiculous self-importance, that he intended to marry her himself. I think, however, that I may be sure that Hebe will never be united to *him* : I will even venture to pronounce that she will marry no man except *me* ; but it will be a difficult matter, I imagine, to to get her out of Sir Thomas's power : for though I am certain that she loves *me* alone, there is always a little delicacy required in the management of such affairs as these ; and delicacy there *should* be in the management of them : the woman who, on such occasions, is guilty of any indelicacies, will never make a good wife : yet there may be too much refinement. I am extremely impatient to see my dear girl. I asked Sir Thomas to let
me

70 THE HISTORY OF

me acquaint her with the result of my conference with him : the brute refused me, and said he would tell her himself. I shall, however, endeavour to get at her, and try to prevail on her to consent to be mine, in spite of *his* refusal. I will first write, and see what effect a letter will have upon her. If she will go off with me, I will trust to chance for the recovery of her fortune ; *that* is a mere trifle when put in competition with her person and her mind, in the opinion of

yours, &c.

E. EUSTON.

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LETTER XVII.

LORD HAMPTON TO MR. SELWYN.

YOU tell me that you have no success in your efforts to please my little girl ; but I believe you are mistaken : you wrong your own merit, and her discernment. It is impossible for her to be blind to your good qualities---setting aside your personal attractions---and I hope that her heart is not already engaged. By the ease, and unaffected cheerfulness of her looks and behaviour, indeed, on her first arrival here, and for some time afterwards, I imagined it to be entirely at liberty ; but last night, she looked so dejected and unhappy, that I, at first, feared she was ill. When she assured me
of

72 THE HISTORY OF

of the contrary, I thought something had happened to make her uneasy, and desired her to speak to me with the greatest freedom ; to look upon me as her sincerest friend.

She fetched so deep a sigh at the mention of the last word, that I told her, between jest and earnest, I hoped she was not in love—at least with nobody but *you*.

A rosy blush, at that moment, overspread her face: I concluded, therefore, that I had guessed right, though she seemed to be a little disconcerted at my having found her out. She is really a most amiable girl, and I think you cannot fail of being happy in her affection; the simplicity of her manners too, and taste, must surely render her a very desirable

MISS PETWORTH. 73

nable wife. The love of a woman with such a disposition must be the zenith of felicity ; I do not imagine she will be ever liable to change when she is once fixed, and treated with a proper return of tenderness. You will tell me, perhaps, that I, of all people, should not venture to be so sanguine about her *constancy*, as my Lady acts so strongly in opposition to that *conjugal virtue* : but then be pleased to consider, that Lady Hampton never in any shape resembled Miss Percy ; she was brought up agreeably to the present dissipated and extravagant mode of living : she was not incapable of feeling tender sensations : she felt them but with too much violence : they could not be lasting. Weary of one pursuit, she flew to another with avidity : unluckily for us both, her predominant pleasure not being of a cloying nature, has been warm-

74 THE HISTORY OF

ly pursued ever since, and she will, in all probability, be warmly addicted to it to her dying day : 'tis highly probable, also, that I shall linger out the remainder of my life, not only destitute of enjoyment, but liable to every disagreeable, every dangerous situation, in which a man can be possibly placed, who has a wife devoted to deep play. By such a woman, her house, her friends, her husband, every thing, in short, which ought to engage her most earnest attention, are neglected for, are swallowed up by, the gaming-table. Happy had I been if she had never felt an inclination for me ! However, since it is my unfortunate lot to be allied to a woman of this turn, I must bear it in the best manner I can : yet when I see that there are women of so different a turn, I am sometimes induced to lament a marriage of which I
never

MISS PETWORTH. 75

never approved : I can truly say, it was a marriage of compassion : I pitied the lady, on account of her prepossessions, and in consequence of my pity I made her my wife. I believed, indeed, and surely not without some reason, that I could not be unhappy with the woman by whom I was beloved : yet had I known that her love for me would have been of so very short a duration, I certainly should not have ventured upon her, as I might have found a woman more suitable to my own taste, with whom I might have lived a life truly domestic, a life which I shall never, I fear, now experience. Reflections of this kind make me melancholy---But why should I proceed?---I have no desire to make *you* feel *my* sensations. I will therefore conclude,

Yours as usual,

E 2

HAMPTON,

LETTER XVIII.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

THIS old dragon, Sir Thomas, keeps such a strict watch over my fair Hebe that I am not only unable to get at the sight of her, but even to get any answer to the many letters I have sent to her, to persuade her to seize an opportunity to elope with me to the *Land of Matrimony*. I will not, however, give her up so ; I will persevere in making efforts to release her from her confinement, and to put her under a more pleasing one. I am sure she loves me ; she will, therefore, be glad, most certainly, to change her old guardian for me. I have hitherto attempted to bribe the
servants

MISS PETWORTH. 77

servants to no purpose ; but I have another thought. I have accidentally met with a man who transacts the old fellow's business in the Alley ; for, next to his *ward*, he loves money better than any thing in the world. Now, if I can but get him into the city, upon the prospect of a good bargain, I may be able to storm his castle in his absence, and carry off my fair prize. Yet methinks there is something queer in being forced to take a step of this sort. The woman who gives her consent to such a manner of proceeding, loses a little of that delicacy which renders her alluring. Such proceedings as these, indeed, throw opportunities in a man's way which he may not be always able to resist ; they certainly create a number of *awkwardnesses* at least, on both sides. In short, I rather wish that the old Argus would

78 THE HISTORY OF

let me have my Hebe in the common way ; but as he is obstinate, and as I am morally certain that I cannot live without *her*, I must get her upon the best terms I can. Her situation is, undoubtedly critical ; and, to say the truth, I am too much afraid that a woman who runs off with one man, *may*, at some other time, be strongly tempted to run off with another, on his appearing more agreeable to her fancy. What are *your* sentiments, Carey, upon this particular and perplexing subject ? If they coincide with mine, write to me immediately, or your letter may not reach me in several days. Wherever I am, I shall always be

yours most sincerely,

E. EUSTON.

L E T.

LETTER XIX.

Miss PERCY to Miss PETWORTH.

WHERE are you, my dear Hebe? It seems to be an age since I saw you. You could not have staid away from me at a more unlucky time. I have no friend but yourself to speak to—No friend! I ought not to say so, neither, as Lord Hampton is a very kind one: yet his kindness gives me the greatest disquiet. I dare not begin to open my heart to him, lest he should read there what it is not proper for him to know. How happily---how unhappily too am I situated! To be always near a man so finely sensible and accomplished as Lord Hampton is; to hear

80 THE HISTORY OF

him read ; to listen to his conversation ; to be under his protection ; to see him every day, and all the day ; to know that he is my friend ; to behold him studious to procure me pleasure ; to know that he is warmly interested in my happiness---Oh, Hebe ! have I not sufficient reason to be contented with my situation ? And yet I am *not* contented with it. How undeserving am I of Lord Hampton's friendship ! of his kindnesses ! of his attentions !---I sometimes endeavour to excuse myself, by imagining that I am really injured, by being so earnestly urged to consent to Mr. Selwyn's proposals. He has not, indeed, made any overtures lately ; but I see plainly, he wishes to renew them ; and I see, as plainly, by the eagerness with which my Lord *recommends* him, that your observation, with regard to his liking me,

was

was a very just one. No---Lord Hampton has a better taste---he has more discretion---I should not have thought of him in the manner, the improper manner I do, had not *you* and *he* so strongly pressed me to accept of Mr. Selwyn. It was not till then I considered the great difference between them : I am ready to allow Mr. Selwyn all the merit to which he is justly entitled, yet he must certainly appear in an inferior light, in the eyes of most impartial judges, when compared with his Lordship. Mr. Selwyn, it is true, takes an infinite deal of pains to please me, but---I am sorry to say it---to no purpose. I am expected to look upon him as a lover ; as a friend I am very ready to regard him, and to treat him with all the consideration in my power. I told my Lord so, last night. He replied, that a delicate young woman's

82 THE HISTORY OF

friendship for a person of the opposite sex would be sufficient, as it probably would gradually ripen into a very tender passion. I glowed like scarlet at this declaration : not that I have ever said any thing to Mr. Selwyn, to bring blushes into my cheeks ; but I blush lest my Lord should, from my silly behaviour when I am with him, suspect what passes in my heart. I am quite embarrassed, quite distressed, when I think of my past behaviour ; and I am extremely fearful of committing new follies. Come then, my dearest Hebe, and by your advice, your friendly society, reconcile me a little to myself, for I am at present, very low indeed in my own estimation. I am still, however, with unabated sincerity,

your affectionate friend,

C, PERCY.

L E T.

LETTER XX.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

Petersham.

YOU will be surprised, my dear Kitty, to receive a letter from me, I imagine, dated at Petersham : you will be much more surprised at what I have to relate ; and as you are, on many accounts, entitled to my information, I shall be very particular, that *you*, warned by what has happened to *me*, may never be prevailed on to act in opposition to reason and discretion : by such an opposition I have not only been thrown into the greatest danger, but I have behaved in such a manner, as to exclude myself

E. 6

from

84 THE HISTORY OF

from happiness during the remainder of my life.

You must, undoubtedly, have wondered at my neither seeing you, nor writing to you. Agreeably to *your* advice, and still more to my own inclination, I permitted Euston to solicit Sir Thomas's consent, though I was thoroughly assured, at the same time, that he would never obtain it.

Sir Thomas peremptorily refused his consent, and was also so apprehensive of my leaving him, that he confined me to my own apartment. This proceeding, I must confess, galled me beyond all bearing, and I was, at length, weak enough to be over-persuaded to take a step which will admit of no justification—Would every woman sufficiently reflect

fect upon the consequences naturally to be expected from such a step before she takes it, she would suffer almost any thing rather than venture upon it.

While I was confined in my apartment, fretting at a situation which soon became extremely disagreeable to me, I was surprised at the entrance of Euston. He told me that Sir Thomas was safe for a couple of hours, and that he had prevailed on the maid to let him see me.

I scarce know what answer I made to so unexpected an address. I am afraid I discovered but too much pleasure at the trouble he had taken, and at the expence to which he had put himself to procure a sight of me; for *at* the sight of me he discovered the greatest transports: urging, at the same time, a thousand

86 THE HISTORY OF

thousand reasons to convince me of the necessity of seizing that opportunity to go off with him to Scotland: assuring me, also, that he did not believe I should ever find another; that he had a post-chaise waiting at the end of the street; and that not a moment was to be lost, if I was not determined to punish myself, and render *him* miserable for life, by marrying Sir Thomas.

I shuddered, I confess, at the alternatives which he placed before me in the most striking lights. I could not, indeed, endure the thoughts of so odious a marriage, nor could I resolve to act in the imprudent, indelicate manner, proposed by my lover. Is not a woman chargeable with want of delicacy as well as prudence, who trusts herself with a man upon such an occasion? Yet what shall

MISS PETWORTH. 87

shall I say, my dear Kitty, in my excuse? I was certainly infatuated; I was no longer under the guidance of reason. The eloquence of the man in whom I imagined I might fully confide, added to the horror I felt at the idea of becoming the wife of a man whom I loathed, prompted me, at last, to consent. Still, however, I hung back; still I hesitated: I wished for some friend to advise me, some friend to countenance me in pursuing a measure of which I could not approve; but no friend was at hand to dissuade me from a proceeding so much to be condemned—I was left to the direction of my own passions. Hurried on by fear, and over-powered by the importunities of the man who pretended to have as true a regard for my happiness as he had for his own, I, at length, though with no small reluctance,

88 THE HISTORY OF

ance, complied ; or, to speak more properly, I suffered myself to be led, an unresisting victim, to the chaise.

At first, however, I most earnestly insisted upon my maid's going with me, foolishly believing that she who had already betrayed her trust, would be faithful to me ; it was this consideration which made Euston oppose her attending us. She was, therefore, left behind, to tell what she pleased of my conduct, which, if not absolutely criminal, was not certainly to be vindicated.

When we set out, the driver was ordered to make all the haste in his power.

During our rapid ride, Euston, seeing me extremely terrified, availed himself of all his soothing arts to render me more
satisfied

MISS PETWORTH. 89

satisfied with my conduct, in consequence of his intreaties, and with *him* also. He behaved to me, I must own, with the most respectful tenderness, which, by degrees, restored me to myself, and prompted me to rely more firmly on him. Besides, I really thought it politic, if not prudent, to give the man whom I had consented to marry, by eloping with him, some proofs of my partiality for him; I was, indeed, irresistibly impelled to give him such proofs by the sensations I felt in his favour. Yet, though I found myself more at ease and more satisfied with his behaviour than I had expected to be, I kept up a reserve, because I thought it quite necessary. My reserve, I soon found, both disconcerted and displeased him: he carried it off, however, pretty well

well till we sat down to supper, at the end of our first day's journey.

At supper, as I found myself little disposed to eat, he pressed me extremely to take some refreshment; he pressed me, also, to drink freely of what, he assured me, was a very small, but enlivening kind of negus. To do him the only justice he has left in my power, I really believe there was nothing of an intoxicating nature added to make the wine more powerful, but I repeatedly excused myself from tasting more than a single glass, though he, indeed, pleading his fatigue, and the relief it afforded him, took a pretty large quantity of it. When he had taken several draughts he began to behave to me with a freedom which offended me: he took liberties with me which alarmed me, and determined

mined me hastily to leave him; I rose, and retired to the room I had chosen. There I locked myself in, and instead of going to bed, threw myself into a chair, giving myself up to the most mortifying reflections, as I concluded that if he proceeded so far upon our first stage, I had much to fear from his behaviour in our progress. I was terrified to death when I considered where I was, and with whom I was; when I considered that the man whom I had distinguished from all his sex had deceived me. However, though I was shocked at, what I thought, the cruelty of his conduct, I was still so infatuated that I felt emotions very favourable to him; emotions for which I heartily despised myself—How indiscreetly does the woman behave who puts herself in the power of a man whom she loves, before she is
honour-

92 THE HISTORY OF

honourably united to him ! I have been but too soon sensible of the truth of this remark. But to go on : Infatuated as I was, I still had spirit enough (especially as I had gained time by breaking from him, and by reflecting upon my dangerous situation) to determine to fly from the man who had dared to abuse the confidence I had placed in him.

The moment it was light, in the morning, I went softly out of my room, ran down stairs, quitted the house, and walked as fast as I could to the end of the town.

I went into the first house I saw with a door open ; it happened to belong to some working people. Telling them that I had been taken ill in my way to London, I begged them to procure me
a place

MISS PETWORTH. 93

a place in the stage-coach; and to permit me to stay with *them* till it was ready to set out, thinking I should be safer in a stage-coach with other company, than alone in a post-chaise. They complied with my request, and treated me with great civility, without discovering an impertinent curiosity about me. I rewarded their civilities with a trifling present, and set out towards London in the stage—Luckily for me there happened to be very inoffensive, quiet people in it, who gave me no sort of trouble, but suffered me to give a loose to my reflections. My reflections, indeed, at that time, were not agreeable ones; I wished, however, to indulge them. My greatest difficulty was whither to go, upon my arrival in London, as I could not rationally expect any tolerable treatment from Sir Thomas; as I could not
but

94 THE HISTORY OF

but suppose, indeed, that he would take advantage of what had happened, in order to hurry me into a marriage, of which I could not think without the greatest abhorrence. Once it came into my head to desire Lord Hampton's protection, as it was my first wish to be with *you*, my dear Kitty, but I had several reasons against taking such a step, and I knew not, for a considerable time, in what manner to act: at length, I thought I would go to Buller, and ask her advice in an affair of so much importance to my character and my peace. My character, I concluded, was lost, and most deservedly, by the indiscreetness of my own conduct; by leaving the guardian whom my father had appointed to take care of me, and going away with a man, without acquainting any body with my designs.

When

MISS PETWORTH. 95

When I came to London, I called a hackney-coach, and went directly to Mrs. Buller's. Fortunately I found her at home. I related to her all that had passed, without making any concealments, and earnestly entreated her to tell me what I must do; for as to giving my consent to marry Sir Thomas after the folly I had been guilty of, I could not think of it—I did not imagine, indeed, that he would look upon me as worthy of his attention, after such unjustifiable behaviour.

Mrs. Buller, ever sensible and friendly, told me, that there was but one way for me, in her opinion, to extricate myself from the perplexity in which I was involved—"You must chuse another guardian immediately," added she, "to secure you from all farther insults
" from

96 THE HISTORY OF

“from Sir Thomas; those which you
 “have already received may be very
 “properly urged by you in defence of
 “your elopement with Euston: *he* will
 “not,” continued she, “be much dis-
 “posed to talk about an affair, in the
 “management of which he has not suc-
 “ceeded.”

I was extremely pleased with this pro-
 posal. “But whom shall I chuse?” re-
 plied I; “whom can I trust, after hav-
 “ing been deceived by one, and so ill
 “treated, as well as deceived, by ano-
 “ther?”

She paused a moment, and then said,
 “What think you of my brother? You
 “know little of him, indeed; but I will
 “venture,” added she, with a smile, “to
 “answer for his not behaving to you
 “either like Sir Thomas or Euston.”

“I have

like her is rich

MISS PETWORTH. 97

"I have not the pleasure of knowing your brother," said I, gaining some courage from the hopes of having a new protector.

"No!" replied she, "he has lived chiefly at Petersham since the commencement of our acquaintance. A natural inclination for privacy, increased by a disappointment he met with in the early part of his life, has almost fixed him to the pleasant spot he purchased some years ago there. You need not be afraid," added she, laughing; "he will not lock you up with him."

"I am not afraid, my dear Mrs. Bul-
ler," answered I, "of being confined by
any body belonging to you. I am on-
ly afraid that your brother will not ac-

VOL. I.

F

"cept

98 THE HISTORY OF

“cept of so troublesome a charge. I
“have suffered so severely from my first
“false step, that I can assure you, faith-
“fully, he may be very easy about me
“for the rest of my life.”

She smiled, and said, “I am glad to
“see you have not lost your spirits: but
“there is no time to be lost; the best
“thing you can do is to set out directly,
“though it is past eight o’clock.”

I readily acquiesced with her proposal,
as I was apprehensive of Sir Thomas’s
finding me out before I had put myself
under the protection of another guardian.

Mrs. Buller was as little desirous of
Sir Thomas’s finding me at *her* house—
or indeed at any house—as I could be.

While

MISS PETWORTH. 99

While I was upon the road, and not till then, I began to reflect that should I be overtaken by him, he would certainly get me into his hands again, as he could have no reason to expect any resistance from two helpless women—However, I did not meet with such an additional misfortune.

After having been terrified with not a few apprehensions of every kind, we arrived at Mr. Edwards's.

Mr. Edwards received his sister in a very affectionate, and *me* in a very polite manner. I was pleased with his first appearance; there was a plain kind of eloquence both in his person and his address, which sufficiently shewed him to be the gentleman in every respect; and I doubted not, from what I saw, but that

100 THE HISTORY OF

he would behave to me with the greatest propriety. Mrs. Buller introduced me in the prettiest way imaginable, and related my disagreeable history in terms which placed the folly I had committed in the least contemptible light. I felt myself blush, however, up to the eyes, at hearing my absurd conduct mentioned, though by a friend, who was kind enough to soften it as much as it could be softened. I was then truly sensible of the indelicacy of which I had been guilty, by going off with Euston; and the more so, as he had made the most ungenerous return for the confidence I reposed in him. My reflections on *that* return lessened him so exceedingly in my opinion, that I believed myself quite cured of the partiality I once felt for him; they also served to make me endeavour to recommend myself to Mr. Edwards, whose

MISS PETWORTH. 101

whose protection was the principal object I had in view.

Mr. Edwards very kindly accepted of the charge which his sister earnestly pressed him to undertake; and seeing me awkwardly embarrassed, good-naturedly attempted to administer consolation to me. I did not, perhaps, deserve consolation, but I certainly wanted it; I was extremely depressed.

Edwards saw every thing that passed in my heart; and strove to give a more chearful turn to the conversation; but my spirits were too much sunk to be raised by his friendly efforts. In vain did he try to enliven me. He proposed to his sister our return to London; but the dread of being exposed to the eyes of the public, after having acted with so

F 3

much

much indiscretion, made me breathe a wish to be concealed a little from it.

Edwards, with great politeness, assured me that I should be my own mistress at all times. "However," added he, "if you will follow *my* advice, you will go into public immediately—That is the best way, in my opinion, to silence any reports to your disadvantage, and to convince the world of the falsity of any scandalous aspersions, which may be thrown out against you by the envious and censorious of both sexes."

"You are very good, Sir," replied I, "to endeavour to make me more satisfied with myself than I can have any reason to be, at present : but as it *must* be known that I have left Sir Thomas, it will also be known that I went away with Mr. Euston."

"By

"By chusing a new guardian," said
 he, "in consequence of the impro-
 per treatment you met with from Sir
 Thomas, you will sufficiently apolo-
 gize for your conduct, and clear your-
 self from all blame. As to Mr. Eu-
 ston, if *he* is quiet, nobody will su-
 spect, nobody will believe, at least,
 any improper connection between *you*
 and *him*. If he should be imperti-
 nent, it will be *my* place to silence
 him instantly. You cannot, there-
 fore, Madam," continued he, "*ap-
 pear* too soon."

Was not this advice very judicious,
 Kitty? I determined to take it, but
 begged a couple of days just to recover
 myself. He very readily granted my
 request, telling me, at the same time,
 that he believed that he should not be
 able to deny me any thing.

This was a fine speech, Kitty, from a man who is to direct me in all my affairs—Hitherto, I have found men the greatest of all deceivers: I wish I may meet with no more of the same kind. Here indeed is a flattering appearance of honour and integrity. Mr. Edwards, if he proves what he seems to be, will merit my highest esteem, and I shall be fortunate indeed: but whatever be the event, let *my* indiscretion be a warning to *you*; be warned by *me*, Kitty, never to let passion get the better of reason. Terrified as I was at Sir Thomas's behaviour, I should not have acted in a manner so opposite to that modesty and delicacy by which every female should aim to distinguish herself. I am absolutely astonished when I think on what is past; when I think of having ventured on such a journey alone with a
man.

MISS PETWORTH. 105

man. I am now thoroughly convinced of my folly, I despise myself for it, and, I hope, my sincere contrition will, in some measure, atone for my deviation from the line of prudence. I hope, too, that *my* example will deter every young person from acting in the same censurable manner. Prompted by *this* consideration, I shall not oppose my re-appearance in town for a few days, at Mrs. Buller's; there I shall be extremely glad to see *you*.

I have already made my letter so long that I cannot stay to enter into particulars in answer to your last favour. In general I cannot help saying, that I disapprove of your encouraging a passion for a man of whom it is criminal to think, as *you* think of him. You flatter yourself that you may innocently indulge

F 5

yourself

yourself in a friendship for him; but if *friendship* with *man* is like friendship with *woman*, *sister to love*, the indulgence of it in *your* situation is not to be defended. Pray, Kitty, turn your thoughts from Lord Hampton, fix your affectionate regard on Mr. Selwyn, and be assured that I shall ever remain,

yours sincerely,

HERR PETWORTH.

LETTER XXI.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

LONG e're this I thought to have been exulting in my happiness, a joyful bridegroom; but I deserve the disappointment I have met with. Yet tell me, Carey, what opinion should you have formed

formed of the woman who had courage to elope with a man ; who would trust herself so many days and nights to his pressing solicitations to make both him and herself happy, and not to delay, merely for an idle ceremony, that could not add a single transport to their joys ? And pray tell me, also, what opinion must any woman have of a fellow who, pretending to be passionately in love with her, should sit tamely by her side, and never attempt the smallest familiarities with her—never solicit any favours ! I should have looked upon myself, I confess, as the most indifferent, the most insensible of all men ; I should have believed that I appeared in the lady's eyes in the most contemptible light, had I so behaved. I have found myself mistaken, however ; I could hang myself for my temerity, at a time when I thought I was doing a laudable action. In short, Ca-

108 THE HISTORY OF

rey, I persuaded the poor, terrified girl to go off with me, in the absence of her guardian, who had persisted in his determination to marry her : but it was a difficult matter to prevail upon her, and I believe it was a sincere inclination for me, added to the horror she felt at the thoughts of being tied to the old dotard, which made her consent to go off with me ; though she consented with the greatest reluctance. Still I argued thus—
 “ The woman who cannot refuse to accompany a man so many miles by herself, cannot deny him any thing.” Besides, my Hebe looked so gentle, and so tender, and was so entirely in my power, that I could not possibly resist the temptation. I therefore made the attack, but I was repulsed with all the pride and spirit of injured virtue. Her repelling behaviour absolutely surprised

me—

me—disconcerted me, as I had really imagined that a woman who could venture to take *one* wrong step, would, with very little hesitation, comply with my warmest wishes. I hardly knew what to say to her—I suffered her to retire to her apartment, while I remained awe-struck and stupified with what had just past. At the same moment I felt myself ready to applaud *her* conduct, and to condemn *my own*. The first thing I heard in the morning was her departure. I was then sensible that I had behaved both like a fool and a rascal, and that no loose or improper inclination had prompted her to go off with me, but merely a desire to prevent Sir Thomas's exercising any undue authority over her, and to settle herself agreeably with a man in whom she imagined she might place an entire confidence; to whom—I blush when I say

TO THE HISTORY OF

say so—she was unjustly partial. I was sensible of my folly too late : I could not recall what was past ; and Hebe had put it out of my power to beg her pardon, and to prevail on her to be reconciled to me.

Hastening to London, I soon found that she was gone to reside with the agreeable widow who had accompanied her to Almack's concert, and that she had chosen her brother for her guardian.

I sat down immediately, and wrote a very penitential letter, in which I lamented, most pathetically, the impropriety, the indelicacy of my conduct ; assured her, of my concern and remorse, and assured her, at the same time, that it was my fixed resolution never to offend in that way again.—I might have spared myself the pains I took to produce the
restoration

MISS PETWORTH. 111

restoration of her favour : she returned my letter unopened.

This behaviour of hers galled me, I must own, exceedingly : it did not, however, discourage me. I wrote again and again—all to no purpose—She, peremptorily refuses either to see me, or to hear from me. What obstinacy ! Yet she is right : I deserve to be punished—but surely there should be some limitation to my punishment : it ought not to be perpetual.—After all, this delicate and noble behaviour of hers has raised her considerably in my esteem, and when I reflect upon the distress to which I reduced her—for the poor, dear, insulted girl shed tears—my soul melts within me ; I could die, methinks, for the recovery of her good opinion : but I see not the most distant prospect of it. I admire, I adore her,

112 THE HISTORY OF

her, for the resistance she made to my desires. I am thoroughly convinced that I have been wrong, yet I cannot help thinking it hard that I should lose her at the very moment I have so much reason to esteem her, to doat on her—I am now going to try some other method to get at her. In the mean while do *you* think for me, and inform me of any thing you imagine likely to soften this obdurate girl in favour of

your sincere friend,

E. EUSTON.

LETTER XXII.

Miss PERCY to Miss PETWORTH.

I Received your letter, my dear Hebe, and should have flown, even to Peter-sham, to see you, had I not been prevented

vented by having a feverish cold upon me. Lord Hampton will not suffer me to go out yet; he is only too kind, too considerate for my peace. He sat with me the best part of every day, read to me, and played to me on a very fine organ, by turns, during my indisposition!

The terror I felt at reading of your dangerous situation, of your whole proceedings, indeed, is not to be described. How could you, my dear, sensible Hebe, think of venturing yourself so far with a man alone? I tremble at the thoughts of the risk you ran. What a pity is it that you did not think of chusing another guardian before! However I am glad you are under the care of Mr. Edwards, who is, I hope, a worthy man.

To

114 THE HISTORY OF

To what dangers are unfortunate girls, deprived of their parents, exposed ! I think, my dear friend, I never could have had courage to take the step you have taken—I rejoice at your escape, and am of opinion that it is best for you to appear as usual in public, with proper company ; for though you have been indiscreet, you have been happily preserved from the greatest of all misfortunes—You have also discovered that, though you liked the man with whom you went away, you had spirit enough to resent his unwarrantable behaviour in a manner truly laudable.

I have not said any thing to my Lord about this affair ; but I shall be glad of your permission to acquaint him with it. I wish you would give me leave to mention it to him ; he ought to be trusted
with

MISS PETWORTH. 115

with it. A sincere girl should conceal nothing relating to herself, or even of her acquaintance, from those who have the care of her. I wish, also, I could follow your advice. Mr. Selwyn is always here, and does every thing in his power to please me; yet I cannot look upon him as a lover, though I think he merits all my regard as a friend: but *friendship* with *him*, Hebe, will not be *sister to love*.

I am,
my dear Hebe,
your ever affectionate
C. PERCY.

LET.

LETTER XXIII.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

Clerges-Street.

I Thank you for your kind visit, my dear Kitty. Mrs. Buller, and Mr. Edwards were both much pleased with you. As to myself, I was sorry to see you look so pale and thin. Indeed, Kitty, I fear you give way to a folly which may prove injurious to you in every shape—You ought to try—you *must* try to conquer it.

You wish to be informed how Sir Thomas behaved, upon Mr. Edwards's telling him, when he came to Mrs. Buller's,

MISS PETWORTH. 117

ler's, that I had done him the honour (that was his polite expression) to chuse him for my guardian, and that I chose not to see *him*.

The old gentleman flew into a violent passion, and said that I ought to have given him my reasons in a public manner when I left him, that he might not be charged by the world with any impropriety of behaviour to me ; adding, that he had always intended to marry me himself, but that he thought he was well rid of me, as I had, by eloping with a fellow whom he had forbidden to see me, been guilty of a very capital indiscretion.

" Since this is the case, Sir," said Mr. Edwards, " you cannot be displeased
" with Miss Petworth, for having with-
" drawn herself from your protection."

" Yes,

118 THE HISTORY OF

"Yes, Sir, I *am* displeased at her ungrateful behaviour," said the old knight, in a violent puff. "I found it, indeed, an arduous task to keep such a wild, head-strong girl in tolerable order: but as she was left to my charge by her father, who was my worthy friend, I do not chuse to have her forced from me; and I will not suffer her to be detained from me."

"As to that, Sir," replied Mr. Edwards, "you must appeal to the court of chancery. I have nothing farther to tell you, than that the young lady's choice of *me* for her guardian is confirmed, and that you have nothing more to do with her."

Upon this the baronet began to swear in so furious a manner, that Mr. Edwards

wards insisted upon his leaving his house immediately. As soon as he got rid of him, he gave orders he should not be admitted if he came again.

The moment I was sure that Sir Thomas was gone, I flew down stairs, and thanked Mr. Edwards for his behaviour. He received me with smiles, and said, that nothing could have given him more pleasure than the having pleased me.

I find myself very agreeably situated here. Mrs. Buller is exceedingly obliging, and did not my reflections on my absurd conduct prove troublesome, I might be happy : that is, as happy as a single state can make me; for surely, my Kitty, I can never think of marrying after what has passed. Where is the man who will think of making me his wife? or suppose any
man

man should offer to marry me, how can I, with the least delicacy, accept of him? Would he not know that I had been all night with a man alone; that I had eloped with him with my own consent; and that he had dared to insult me? I might say, indeed, that notwithstanding the dangers to which I had been exposed, I had escaped without the loss of my virtue; but who would believe my assertions? And admitting that my assertions were credited, I should be shocked at the thoughts of my dangerous situation. I should imagine that I could not but appear in a contemptible light, on account of my indiscretion, even by him who had generosity enough to overlook it. You will tell me, perhaps, that I may conceal my indiscretion from the man who makes his addresses to me. I will never act so hypocritical a part. He who can love me
well

MISS PETWORTH. 121

well enough to spend his life with me, will be entitled to the most unreserved confessions. You see, then, that I must always remain as I am; and, perhaps, it is best for me to remain so. Yet do you not know, Kitty, that there is a certain perverseness in human nature, which makes us frequently wish for what is not fit for us, and sigh after what we must never enjoy? However, I shall not be one of those who languish for every thing which is out of their reach. On the contrary, I shudder at the most distant idea of love and marriage—I was never designed for matrimony—so much the better it may be: if it is a state of pleasure to some, it is a state of sorrow and misery to others. I once, indeed, imagined that I should have been *happily married* to Euston—But how came I to mention the cruel author of my

disappointment and shame! Yet he will sometimes, I fear, intrude upon my thoughts—Not that I would have you fancy, my dear, I am capable of feeling any tender sensations for a man who could take so barbarous an advantage of the confidence I had placed in him: I only lament my having been so mistaken in him. Had he not so grossly imposed upon me, I might have believed myself the happiest of creatures: such a belief might have made me think my late conduct laudable: instead of reproaching myself for what I now consider as a capital error, I might have applauded myself for having taken a step greatly to be condemned by every sensible, prudent, modest girl. It is fit, therefore, that I should see things in their proper colours; it is fit that I should suffer for my folly.

I am

MISS PETWORTH. 123

I am all submission to my fate—Euston does not, certainly, look upon this affair in the same light as I do; he has wrote several letters to me; I have returned them all unopened. He has since been here himself, and desired to see me. On my repeated refusal, he asked for Mrs. Buller, who was also denied to him. I hope he will now cease to take any notice of me. If I could remain here undisturbed, I might in time, I think, be reconciled to past transactions: but I never can forget—I ought not ever to forget them. They will ever live in my memory, to prevent me from committing any more imprudences of the same kind.

Adieu, my dear Kitty—May you take warning by reflecting upon the glaring mistakes of

your affectionate friend,

HEBE PETWORTH.

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L E T.

LETTER XXIV.

MR. EUSTON TO SIR WALTER CAREY.

THIS charming, perverse girl, is determined to undo me every way ; for the more resolute she is to reject me, the more she rises in my esteem. I have wrote, and wrote again. I have made several attempts to speak to her at Mrs. Buller's, but she has constantly refused to come down to me ; nor can I even get at the sight of Mrs. Buller : however, if they will not see me at home, they shall see me abroad. I will follow my dear *inexorable* every where, I will haunt her till she restores me to that peace of which she has robbed me, and which it is in her power alone to give me. That I have

have been wrong, I am very ready to acknowledge: but when I both confess that I am sorry for my faults, and beg pardon for them in the most submissive manner, 'tis hard not to be forgiven. She will, probably, repent, hereafter, of her unrelenting behaviour, as the measures I shall take, in consequence of that behaviour, will only increase her discontent. How blind are we to our own happiness! What dupes are we to our understanding, as well as to our passions! Now, if Miss Petworth would forgive all that has happened, and consent to receive me in company with her friend, every past, disagreeable occurrence might be forgotten. On the other hand, her pride and her obstinacy will oblige me to commit—what *she* may call—new offences, in order to come to a right adjustment of things. And

126 THE HISTORY OF

yet, while I condemn her conduct, I applaud her virtue; I am charmed with it—Her virtue, delicacy, and strength of mind, are in the highest degree deserving of my esteem—She once loved me—Once?—How tormenting is that idea! It tortures me to madness; it deprives me, almost, of the power of determining upon any mode of proceeding. I only know that I will never cease importuning the amiable Hebe, the unkind, the cruel Hebe, till she bestows herself upon

yours, &c.

E. EUSTON.

L E T.

LETTER XXV.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

HOW much am I chagrined, worried and tormented, not only by the upbraidings of my own conscience, but by the persecutions of Euston, who perseveres only to perpetuate the extreme disquiet he has already given me by the insolence of his behaviour.

I went, last night, to the play, but entirely in opposition to my own judgment. I went in compliance with the opinion of Mr. Edwards and Mrs. Bulker, who were both kind enough to accompany me.

128 THE HISTORY OF

I was received with the general stare of the whole house, and a circulation of whispers which disconcerted me exceedingly. However, as my two good friends said and did every thing to re-assure me, I began to recover.

Just when I became a little composed, Euston entered the box opposite to me.

To say that I was surprised, that I was shocked at the sight of him, is to say nothing: it is impossible for me to describe what I felt, when the eyes of every person in the house were entirely taken from the stage, and directed alternately to Euston and to me. As for *him*, I cannot pretend to tell you how he behaved: I can only tell you that he made me a low bow, and that whenever I attempted to lift up my eyes, I found

his

his fixed upon my face. I was, therefore, in such a continual confusion that I could hardly support myself. I sincerely wished the entertainment at an end, that I might get out of the way.

To my extreme amazement, to the very great increase of my vexation, and anger, indeed, Euston met me at the box-door: he met me, and offered me his odious hand.

I started, and looked for Mr. Edwards. I could not see him, but I determined not to give my hand to the man who had betrayed me.

I stopped. A gentleman very politely advancing, put Euston aside, and begged I would give him leave to conduct me to my carriage.

130 THE HISTORY OF

I was so much disconcerted, and so much at a loss to know what to do, and yet so desirous of letting Euston see how greatly I was offended at his intrusion, that I accepted the gentleman's offer.

Euston immediately desired him to let go my hand, as *he* had a prior right to attend me.

You may easily imagine that I was greatly provoked at this new insult. I was not, however, intimidated by it; I was not rendered incapable of informing the gentleman that I had no connections of any kind with Mr. Euston, and that I would put myself under *his* protection.

Upon

Upon this, I heard Euston exclaim,
 " 'Tis very well, Sir—but you shall
 "repent of this insolence; you shall
 "repent of having interfered between
 "*me* and this lady."

My conductor returned no answer.
 Having put me into the coach, he politely took his leave. We drove home without meeting with any interruption.

I should have told you that Mr. Edwards joined us in the passage—He apologized immediately for leaving us so long, adding, that he had stepped out to speak with a gentleman.

As to myself, I was so overcome by what had just happened, and so unhappy to see myself exposed to the censorious remarks of a whole theatre, that

I could not, for some time, articulate a syllable.

Mr. Edwards endeavoured to soothe me, by telling me that he thought Euston's appearing at the play when I was there, and behaving so respectfully, had a lucky aspect, as all reasonable people would be convinced, from his appearance and behaviour, that he was the only aggressor. "Had *you* been guilty of any impropriety, Miss Petworth," continued he, "Mr. Euston would have looked at you, and treated you, in a very different manner."

Mrs. Buller assured me that she was entirely of Mr. Edwards's opinion; but their united efforts could not make me satisfied, either with Euston's appearance
at

at the play, or with my own behaviour : and I strongly declared my resolution never to go into public again.

They both said I should act very foolishly by adhering to that resolution ; as every body would then conclude I had been engaged in a criminal connection ; adding, that by appearing every where, and confronting Euston in all public places, I should, most probably, make *him* appear in an odious light ; and that if there *had been* any improper indulgences on my side, *he* would certainly have shunned me.

These were kind consolations, Kitty ; but they were insufficient ones. I cannot recall what is past ; consequently, I cannot be pleased with *myself*—Still less shall I be pleased at having Euston per-

perpetually near me. His perpetual appearance in my sight will render it totally impossible for me to forget, even for a single moment, my indelicacies, my indiscretions.

My thoughts have been so engaged by these disagreeable occurrences, that I have had no leisure to talk to you about *your* men—your *man*, I mean; for you must not think, in any shape, of *him* whom you would chuse, were your choice in your own power. Really, Kitty, I do not think *he* would have chosen *you*; you should not, therefore, on any account, bestow a thought on him. I would, certainly, in your place, *shew* an equal indifference. I will allow that Lord Hampton is the kind protector, the polite friend; but Selwyn only is the lover; the sincerest, the

MISS PETWORTH. 135

the most delicate, and of course the most deserving. Make much of him, Kitty. Happy are you in having gained such a heart, and I hope you will be wise enough to keep it—But surely I ought to be silent.

Yours, &c.

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER XXVI.

From the SAME to the SAME.

I Am quite unhappy, for I meet with fresh provocations every day; however as I have brought my unhappiness upon myself, I must bear it.

I could not be prevailed upon to go to the opera, though Mr. Edwards very much

136 THE HISTORY OF

much persuaded me. I was so afraid of seeing Euston again that I dared not to venture; yet as I could not refuse compliance with all the requests of my friends, I went with Mrs. Buller to Mrs. Cranmer's rout. *There*, I should have spent my time tolerably, had not a thousand disagreeable reflections crowded into my mind. Whenever I saw any persons take notice of me, I fancied that something was said by them to each other not to my advantage; something, indeed, which I wished I had not encouraged them to say, by the imprudence of my conduct. In consequence of my humiliating apprehensions, I often changed colour, and looked very foolish—I am sure I looked very foolish, as I imagined, if any body laughed, that *I* was the object laughed at; every frown seemed to me a mortifying

fyng condemnation of my behaviour. The men stared at me with a freedom which galled me extremely. I never was conscious of harbouring a loose idea; I never gave encouragement to any improper liberties, and I will never submit to them. Why must I, because I was treated in too familiar a manner by Sir Thomas, and chose to leave him, be thought ready for every man who sees me? It is the ill-judged confidence which I placed in Euston, believing him to be sincere, which has undone me.

Mrs. Buller tells me that as I have frustrated Euston's designs upon me, I have all the reason in the world to be happy. I have, certainly, great reason to be thankful for my escape, and I am so: but to be always looked upon
as

138 THE HISTORY OF
as having fallen a victim to Euston's
villanous intentions, to be always
treated as a woman quite lost to ho-
nour, is inexpressibly shocking.

When I came home from Mrs.
Cranmer's, I sat so buried in thought,
that Mrs. Buller *would* know what
was the matter.

I told her, at last, that I thought
every body behaved to me as if I was
an abandoned wretch.

She replied, " You are entirely mis-
" taken. Your head being full of one
" particular thing, you imagine that
" all the people you meet with, think
" as much about it as you do yourself,
" 'tis more probable that they do not
" think of you at all."—Few persons,
especially

MISS PETWORTH. 139

especially those who are young, and have been accustomed to admiration, chuse to be totally disregarded, yet I am now in such a state that I wish to be overlooked.

I left Mrs. Bulter, quite dissatisfied, but began to reason with myself, when I was alone, and to reason myself gradually into a better way of thinking. I began to be assured that we are all apt to imagine ourselves to be of more importance than we really are. With a new train of ideas, therefore, I slept better than I expected, and rose in the morning in good spirits.

In the evening the Miss Brindleys came in; they were dress'd for the Pantheon.

Miss

Miss Olivia, the youngest, began by saying to me, "You are not going where we are, I see!"

"No, to be sure," said the eldest—"and, indeed, my dear Petworth," added she, "you are vastly in the right I think."

"Why so?" replied I, gravely—For the very sight of them, setting aside the tossing of their heads, and the flouncing of their hoops, lowered me immediately.

"Why so!" said Miss Brindley, repeating my words; "why if people talked so of me as they do of you, I should not dare to put my head out of doors."

I felt

MISS PETWORTH. 141

I felt all the force of this ill-natured speech; but though I shrunk into myself like a person whose reputation had been wounded, and wished to escape from any farther mischief, a strong desire to know what was reported about me, prompted me to say—"I wonder what people *can* say concerning me. I am sure nobody can speak disadvantageously of me, and speak the truth at the same time."

"Is it not true that you set out for Scotland with Mr. Euston? After such a journey, there is no occasion for you to see any men."

"Other people," answered I, blushing, "have gone to Scotland, as well as I; there was nothing, therefore, so very extraordinary in *my* proceeding."

"Yet,"

"Yes," said Olivia, pertly, "but
"they have always returned married."

"May be so," replied I, reddening
both with anger and shame; "but I
"have reasons for not marrying, which,
"if known, might be, perhaps, reckon-
"ed satisfactory ones."

"You may be right, perhaps, my
"dear," said Miss Brindley, softening
her voice a little; "but while they
"remain unknown, you must not be
"surprised if you are liable to censure.
"My sister and I came out of pure
"friendship to tell you how you are
"talked of. Indeed it hurts me ex-
"tremely to hear people run on so; it
"is really amazing how people can
"take such monstrous liberties."

" 'Tis

MISS PETWORTH. 143

" 'Tis very cruel," answered I, quite cast down, by their repeated tauntings ;
" 'tis very cruel in people to be so
" severe."

" It is indeed," said Miss Brindley—
" And the men too," continued she,
" who have so many faults themselves,
" are very impertinent, to assert that
" they are sure no woman can be alone
" with them, without—"

" 'Tis no matter what they say, Miss
" Brindley," replied I, interrupting her,
being out of all patience ; " I do not
" desire to hear any more about them."

" No ?—But indeed you shall," cried
she, " for it is quite an act of friend-
" ship to speak, that you may know
" how to treat them. There was Cap-
" tain

"tain Corbet," added she, pattering
 out her words as fast as possible, lest
 I should stop her, "last night, on Sir
 " James Crowder's saying that he saw
 " you was returned from the land of
 " matrimony; replied, Yes, Sir James,
 " but without having received any be-
 " nefit from her journey.

" How so? said the Baronet, I should
 " imagine that she was come back
 " more knowing than she went out.

" Ay, may be so, replied the officer,
 " with a horse laugh, to shew his white
 " teeth to advantage, but I hope you
 " will allow, Sir James, that it is possi-
 " ble for a woman to be made more
 " knowing without being improved.

" A general laugh of the whole room
 " made the Captain not a little pleased
 " with

MISS PETWORTH. 145

"with his wit; however, you will
"allow, my dear, that it was rather
"ill-natured."

"Such speeches as these," answered
I, in a tone which plainly discovered
how greatly I was mortified, "always
"shew more malice than wit, and
"consequently are not to be regarded."

"Oh! but you are mistaken," said
she, "every body was vastly diverted :
"but that was not all, for soon after-
"wards Lord Ambler asked who you
"was; and when your name was men-
"tioned, he continued to enquire of
"what family you were, and whether
"you was married or single. The
"comical toad Corbet then told him
"that it was well known you were *not*
"married, but that as to your being
Vol. I. H "single

“single or double he could not pretend
 “to say. Your Lordship, however,
 “added he, by enquiring of Mr. Eu-
 “ston, may be thoroughly satisfied
 “about Miss Petworth, as *he* knows
 “more of the business, I believe, than
 “any body.

“Lady Bell Bright, who stood by,
 “then said, that she thought as you
 “were in the party, you were the pro-
 “perest person to be applied to; ad-
 “ding, that she would not take a man’s
 “word about any thing of which a wo-
 “man could give as good an account,

“Provided that woman can be de-
 “pended upon, your Ladyship means,
 “said Sir James.

“This answer occasioned another
 “general shout. Thus you see, my
 “dear,

MISS PETWORTH. 147

"dear, you contributed greatly to the
"entertainment of the company."

Was this to be endured, Kitty? I own it was more than I could well bear, and had not Mrs. Buller, by entering the room, relieved me, I must have absolutely sunk under my feelings. I soon made an excuse to retire, telling the *friendly sisters* that it was time to dress, though I had very little inclination to attempt to ornament my person when my character was torn to pieces.

As soon as the Brindleys were gone, Mrs. Buller came up stairs, and asked me why I ran away from them.

I repeated what they had been saying to me,

H 2

"Oh!

148 THE HISTORY OF

"Oh! never mind it;" replied she,
"the more they talk, the better, as they
"will have done talking the sooner."

I could not, I confess, be of her
opinion: as I was the person aggrieved,
I could not help feeling differently from
her. She strove to cure me of my
weakness, as she called it, by dint of
argument. "I would not have you,"
continued she, "be affected by such
"nonsense; had you really deserved
"the censures which have been levelled
"against you, I should not in the least
"blame you; while you are innocent
"you may laugh at the world."

This is fine reasoning, Kitty, but I
cannot listen to it: however, both Mrs.
Buller and her brother persist in telling
me that I must, by a constant appear-
ance

MISS PETWORTH. 149

ance in public with people of reputation, endeavour to restore my own character; adding, that there was no other way; that I ought to triumph on my having defeated the scandalous designs of Euston; and that though I had better not have trusted him, as I had conducted myself with so much discretion while I was with him, he must, necessarily have a very high opinion of me. They concluded with saying, that they hoped Euston was not so abandoned as to wish to lower me in the esteem of the world; "But supposing he should be so abandoned," added they, "you will have the consciousness of virtue for your consolation."

These are the arguments and persuasions to which my good friends have recourse, in order to make me satisfied

150 THE HISTORY OF

with myself, but I find it impossible to approve of my own conduct—May *you*, my dear Kitty, by avoiding the rock against which I have inconsiderately dashed, be happier than I am; happier than your

sincere friend,

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER XXVII.

MR. EUSTON TO SIR WALTER CAREY.

DISTRESSED, beyond expression, at the continued resentment of Miss Petworth against me, not only for my temerity, but for my appearing where she is in hopes of obtaining her pardon, I went to Lord Hampton's. I should, indeed, have gone thither before,

MISS PETWORTH. 151

fore, but being conscious of not having conducted myself with delicacy to Miss Petworth, I was not sure of meeting with a favourable reception from her little friend. However, I resolved to try : I made an attempt.

My Lord looked very cool upon me. Miss Percy soon left me.

This mode of behaviour disconcerted me a good deal, and I am certain that I looked like a fool. I made a brisk effort, indeed, to recover my effrontery, but it would not do. Conscious of having merited the treatment I have received from all parties, I felt myself so much lowered in my own eyes, I could scarcely look up. Thinking, however, that my silence would only be considered as a confirmation of my guilt, I ven-

tured, at last, to articulate an apology for my abrupt appearance—to apologize a much more difficult task—for my treatment of Miss Petworth, which was, I confess, indelicate, and very ungentle: but while I readily accused myself, I also ventured to ask my Lord if he did not think that a lady by throwing herself into so critical a situation, almost warranted any liberties which could be taken with her.

“ And supposing, Sir, that a lady
 “ *does* throw herself in such a situation,
 “ should the man in whose honour she
 “ places the greatest confidence, take
 “ an improper advantage of it? Cer-
 “ tainly not. He not only, by so base
 “ a procedure, doubles the injury which
 “ she has done herself, but puts it entire-
 “ ly out of his power to gain the noblest
 “ of

MISS PETWORTH. 153

“of all conquests, a conquest over his
“own passions : a conquest more truly
“satisfactory than the possession of the
“finest woman in the universe. Let
“me ask *you* now, Mr. Euston,” continued my Lord, “whether *you*, knowing it to be in your power to abuse the
“confidence of a lady, relying on your
“protection, and feeling the tenderest
“partialities in your favour, would
“not deem yourself a villain for blasting her reputation?”

This last question struck me, Carey. It brought the matter quite home to me—I felt myself, I acknowledged myself, every way to blame. I had indeed made the same acknowledgments, in consequence of the same feelings, in my letters to Miss Petworth, though she would not condescend to open them ;

154 THE HISTORY OF

but I own I was not so fully sensible of the atrociousness of my behaviour as at that moment; especially when my Lord, retortingly, asked me how I felt when the woman whom I attacked had, from the purity of her mind, strength enough to resist me at the very time that she loved me.

What could I say in return? I could say nothing; I was humbled to the dust; I advanced every thing I could think of, in order to prevail on my Lord, whom I hoped to convince of the sincerity of my contrition, to stand my friend, and to undertake, when he imagined that I had, in some measure, atoned for my criminal conduct by an unfeigned repentance, to plead in my behalf. When I had repeatedly assured him, and with additional earnestness,

MISS PETWORTH. 155

ness, with an earnestness which could not be doubted, that my penitence *was* sincere, and *would be* lasting, he consented to become my advocate to my charming Hebe. I also added, that, possibly, if I could gain her amiable friend over to my interest, *she* might be of great service to me.

He reproved me for my presumption, by asking me if I imagined that he ought to trust me with so good, so innocent a girl as Miss Percy. "No," "Mr. Euston," continued he, "I cannot yet trust you with my Kitty: besides, it would be indelicate in her to espouse the cause of a man who had behaved so grossly to her friend. You must not then attempt an intimacy there, as neither decency nor discretion will countenance it." After a

156 THE HISTORY OF

little pause, he added—"Leave it to me
 "—There is one, and only one plea
 "to be urged in your favour, but I know
 "not whether it will be admissible. It
 "cannot, indeed, be urged just now,
 "on any account; but I will avail
 "myself of the first favourable oppor-
 "tunity: I will not, however, say a
 "syllable in your behalf till I am per-
 "fectly convinced that you have en-
 "tirely abandoned your former senti-
 "ments, and that you are quite capa-
 "ble of adhering to those which you
 "have declaredly adopted in the room
 "of them. The assurances which you
 "have made, with regard to your new
 "mode of thinking, are strong ones,
 "but nothing except your absolute refor-
 "mation will be sufficient to make me
 "believe that you will never return to
 "your old opinions concerning wo-
 "men."

All

All this talking was certainly very reasonable ; so much to the purpose, indeed, that I began to look on myself as a consummate coxcomb, for the first time, as I never had appeared to myself in that light before. To say the truth, I was heartily ashamed of the ridiculous and detestable part of my character. Lord Hampton has, therefore completed the reformation which my charming Hebe began : but as she will not believe this, and as *he* requires a length of time to prove the sincerity of the great change in me, I must lay in a large stock of patience ; and, perhaps, even at last, all may not be able to move my sweet girl's valuable heart in my favour. I cannot, however, do too much to obtain so inestimable a prize : *her* heart cannot be too dearly purchased.

In

138 THE HISTORY OF

In spite of Lord Hampton's prohibitions, I cannot help wishing for an opportunity to speak with Miss Percy; she looks full of mildness, gentleness, and compassion: could I but bend her to my purpose! I know she has great influence over her amiable friend, who would not, I hope, be capable of opposing her kind pleadings in my behalf: However, let things take what course they will, I am pleased at having spoken so freely to Lord Hampton. After what he has said, I may venture to come to his house. There I may stand an excellent chance of meeting Miss Petworth; and I may there have an opportunity to let her see that I am not the man I was; that I am determined to endeavour to deserve her, to leave nothing undone to convince her of the delicacy, as well

MISS PETWORTH. 159

as of the strength of my love. Wish
me success, Walter; and believe me
yours for ever

E. EUSTON.

LETTER XXVIII.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

WHY will you not come to me,
my Hebe? Why, at a time that
you tell me you want so much conso-
lation, will you keep away from *me*, who
would do every thing in my power to
to relieve your overcharged mind? Your
coming here may be of much advan-
tage to yourself: your being treated with
respect by people of rank and fashion,
may give a considerable turn to your
affairs, and make those who see you in
a cri-

a criminal light suddenly change their opinions, and believe you as innocent as I know you to be. Lord Hampton, who honours you for having conducted yourself with so much address, in a situation which might have been attended with the most fatal consequences; will, I am persuaded, say and do every thing he can to restore your character and peace. Were you to hear the number of obliging speeches he makes about you, you would not be so averse to the giving us the pleasure of your company. We might also enjoy our conversations together. My Lady is continually engaged at play, and my Lord is generally alone when Mr. Selwyn is here, to whom you cannot surely have any objection, as he is a great favourite of yours. Suppose, Hebe, you was to take *him*? I fancy he would
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MISS PETWORTH. 161

be very glad to change *me* for *you*. Come, and try—most willingly shall I resign him. I told him, very lately, that I could not think of altering my situation. He sighed, and replied, “I know it too well.”

“Had you not better then, Mr. Selwyn,” said I, “turn your attention to some other lady, who would be happy in your preferring her to all her sex?” This is the kindest advice I can give; it is the advice of a sincere friend; of

your affectionate

C. PERCY.

L E T.

LETTER XXIX.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

I HAVE been three or four times at Lord Hampton's. At *his* desire, Miss Percy, who ran from me with such precipitation at first, came back, at his request, this morning. I told her that I sincerely repented of my behaviour to her charming friend, and that I earnestly wished to engage her in my interest, and to prevail on her to intercede with Miss Petworth in my favour. She replied, that nothing *she* could say would be efficacious; adding, that she did not indeed think it very right to stand up in my defence, as she should, by so doing, in some measure countenance

MISS PETWORTH. 163

nance the proceedings of which I had been guilty.

You cannot imagine how innocent and demure she looked when she spoke those words. You would be charmed with this pretty young thing ; there is an unaffected modesty, a simplicity in her manners, which strongly distinguishes her from the generality of women, and renders her particularly attracting. There was so much good sense and propriety in what she said, that though it was against me, I could not be offended at it. I even praised the sentiments which corrected me, and endeavoured, by that means, to ingratiate myself with her ; but it would not do ; she was proof against flattery, and appeared quite unmoved at it. Lord Hampton watched us both, I thought ; but he need not entertain

164 THE HISTORY OF

entertain any apprehensions concerning me; I have no designs upon Miss Percy. I set her down, indeed, as formed for domestic happiness; but she wants that vivacity which gives so many charms to her amiable friend: her heart seems to be enslaved by *one* ruling passion which renders her insensible to every other. I am inclined to believe it is a very tender one: (to any rough passion her heart is, I will venture to say, a stranger) yet she takes an infinite deal of pains to keep it under. My Lord, who treats her with an affectionate kind of respect, does not seem to see any thing particular in her. A Mr. Selwyn, who is a friend of his Lordship's, appears to be passionately fond of her, but meets with no return from her, though she discovers a great esteem for him.

Lord

MISS PETWORTH. 165

Lord Hampton has prevailed on Miss Percy not to mention to Miss Petworth my coming to his house, as such an information might tend to frighten her from coming to see her friend. I now, therefore, stand a chance of meeting her, of speaking to her; and I hope I shall make myself heard. I would fain get this pretty little coy demure thing on my side, but she seems intolerably shy. However, I do not absolutely despair. My Lord has a prodigious influence over his young ward; and he appears to be so far my friend, as to be very willing to support me, if I commit no more irregularities: he is a sensible, agreeable well-bred man. 'Tis a pity that his wife is not of a more suitable disposition. It is the discordance between people who have bound themselves together with the cords of matrimony,

matrimony, which occasions a very considerable part of the unhappiness in the world. Were those who have any thoughts of entering into the marriage state more strict in their mutual enquiries, before they have uttered the irrevocable words, they would have fairer prospects of felicity. By the most exact scrutiny into Miss Petworth's disposition, I have the greatest reason to believe that she is, in every respect, the sort of woman formed to make me supremely blest. How have I undone myself by my own folly ! Yet can I be entirely blamed for trying the woman with whom I was to pass my life ? How few girls are there to be depended upon ! Is it not most probable, that *she* who is ready to elope with *one* man will be as ready to go off with another, should he happen to be more agreeable to her taste ?

MISS PETWORTH. 167

taste ? 'Tis true, I am now convinced that Miss Petworth is not a girl of this sort : but of what advantage to me is my conviction ? I have not only lost the most desirable creature to be conceived, but all my hopes of sitting down contented for life with a woman—with such a woman as I may never find again. Yet surely the gentle Hebe will not for ever retain her resentment against me ; that resentment which she thinks it so necessary at this time to discover ? She ought to consider that, circumstanced as I was, it was hardly in my power to resist the most inviting temptation thrown in my way ; though I am very willing to allow that she was not, intentionally, instrumental to it. Let her, therefore, be satisfied in having shewn her disapprobation of my behaviour ; and after having kept up her
resentment

168 THE HISTORY OF

resentment for a reasonable time, let her seal my pardon by giving me her hand. Surely this cannot be too much to ask, as I shall make it the business of my life to repay her for all her condescensions by numberless acts of kindness, by the tenderest marks of affection and esteem: yes, *esteem*, for I can hardly think it possible for a woman who acted with so much spirit and delicacy, upon so trying an occasion, to be unworthy of it: she must certainly be proof against every attack which can be made upon her honour, as she nobly preserved her virtue at a moment when she was thrown into the most fluttered state with the man she loved, with the man under whose protection she was glad to put herself, to get out of Sir Thomas's power. I am thoroughly persuaded that Hebe would not have taken such a step,
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MISS PETWORTH. 169

had I not availed myself of all the eloquence of the most impassioned tenderness, to induce her to go off with me. Would it were in my power to say any thing now to her, sufficient to answer a similar purpose ! But I shall never be so fortunate a second time. I will, however, leave nothing undone to obtain the golden point I have in view.

Adieu—

E. EUSTON.

LETTER XXX.

MISS PETWORTH TO MISS PERCY.

MRS. Buller, my dear Kitty, is gone to stay with a particular friend for a little while, who is in a bad state of health. She told me she would

VOL. I. I leave

170 THE HISTORY OF

leave her brother to supply her place ; adding, that I need not be afraid of finding in *him* a second Sir Thomas. I have not, indeed, the smallest apprehensions of that kind ; yet I shall take this opportunity of coming to you this afternoon. I miss Mrs. Buller already ; I really love her, and have much reason to do so. She has made me promise to write to her, if any thing remarkable happens during her absence. I could be exceedingly happy in this family, did I not too often think of the past to relish the present. I am, my dear Kitty,

ever yours,

HEBE PETWORTH.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

MISS PETWORTH TO MRS. BULLER.

YOU desired me, my dear friend, when you left me, to write to you if any thing particular occurred. You will certainly be surprised to hear that Lord Hampton, with Miss Percy—(though what *she* did was purely in compliance with *his* inclination) connived at Mr. Euston's meeting me at his house, to which I went yesterday in the afternoon.

I had not been above ten minutes in the parlour, I am sure, when he came in from another room.

172 THE HISTORY OF

Before I could get away, he threw himself at my feet.

I never was so vexed in my life. I started, and endeavoured to run out.

My Lord and Kitty, both stopped me, and joined *him* in requesting me only to hear him.

I replied, that it would be to no purpose, as my resolution was unalterably fixed; adding, that nothing he could say to me would avail, and that I would go home.

In short, I hardly know what I said; I only know that I broke from him, and said, I would go home immediately.

Euston

MISS PETWORTH. 173

Euston then drew back, bowed and begged my pardon; saying, that he found his first fault was not to be repaired, and that he would give me no farther trouble.

I looked upon this merely as a piece of deceit, and did not know how to act; being afraid that if I went away immediately he might follow me.

Kitty, who came out of the room directly after me, intreated me so earnestly to go up stairs with her, that I complied, entirely through fear; though I was so out of humour with her for playing me this trick (I am sure Euston was concealed in the house ready to address himself to me on my coming) that I scarce spoke a word to her.

She actually cried, and said she had done nothing but by the advice of

Lord Hampton, who told her that he thought I had shewn resentment enough, and that he could answer for the sincerity of Mr. Euston's repentance, as well as for his being all I could wish for the future.

I replied, that I could not be of his Lordship's opinion; and that as he had discovered so little delicacy I thought she was by no means safe under his care.

This put Kitty quite in a pet, and I was just going to leave her, when my Lord came up.

I was afraid that Euston was behind him, but he assured me that my apprehensions were unnecessary, as Mr. Euston was gone away in despair, on my persisting

MISS PETWORTH. 175

persisting to refuse to hear what he had to urge in his defence.

I answered, that I was surprised at his Lordship's taking the part of a man capable of acting in the ungenerous manner Mr. Euston had done; and asked him what he would have thought of him if he had treated Miss Percy in the same way.

He replied, that he was sure he should have encouraged her to behave to him as I had done; but that on his finding him truly concerned for his unwarrantable conduct, and wishing to make all possible reparation in his power, he must have left it to the lady to pardon him; "for," added he, "if she had withdrawn herself from my protection,

"I should have immediately concluded
"her unworthy of it."

A pretty severe reflection upon my imprudence, you will say—but I deserve it all. My Lord, though he could bring Mr. Euston to me to be forgiven, could at the same time sharply censure me for my indiscretion, by way of instructing his own ward. In short, my dear Mrs. Buller, I am out of humour with them all, and wish my best friend was returned. Mr. Edwards, indeed, is very good to me. He has begun to hear me play, and has given me a new taste for my harpsichord—If I do not improve with so excellent an instructor it must be my own fault. But I am very dull, at present, at every thing. My spirits have been so much agitated by this unexpected meeting with Euston,

MISS PETWORTH. 177

ston, that I wish for nothing so much
as your return to

your much obliged, and
very affectionate humble servant,
HEBE PETWORTH.

L E T T E R XXXII.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

I HAVE met the dear cause of all my
anxiety at Lord Hampton's. The
amiable confusion which she discovered
at the sight of me, gave her a thousand
new charms—Surprised as she was, and
agitated, she still behaved with the same
uniform propriety, and would not lis-
ten to any thing I could say in my de-
fence. The spirit with which she re-

pulsed me sparkled in her lovely eyes, and made her fine complexion more glowing; and the emotions visible in her whole frame so much encreased my tenderness and pity for having thus again distressed her, that I felt myself inexpressibly pained at seeing her unhappy. I wished most ardently to be capable of relieving her; I never so sincerely repented of my behaviour as at that moment—I am continually reflecting on the irreparable loss I have sustained, not only by driving from me a charming, elegant, young creature, but losing a mind so valuable—so inestimable. 'Tis possible, certainly, to meet with a woman as handsome as Miss Petworth, but where shall I find all her undescribable graces? In whom shall I find that firmness of mind, that unshaken virtue, which can alone constitute happiness in
the

the marriage state? I begin, indeed, to think that I do not deserve it—I ought to have respected her delicacy; I ought to have considered that she was entirely under my protection, that she had, at that time, no other friend in the world—Should I, because she placed so great a confidence in me, have given her reason to repent of it, and to fly from me as if I had been infected with a contagious distemper? How scandalously have I acted! With what cruelty have I behaved! I have been an absolute barbarian to the most tender and delicate of all girls—I abhor my being; and if she cannot be prevailed on to pardon me, I can never be reconciled to myself. But I see—and I see with the utmost concern, that I have not, at present, the smallest hopes of that nature—I see that I only irritate her by

my importunities, and, therefore, I must be content to wait till she is convinced, by a total change of conduct, that I am not the same man, that I am wholly altered; so altered as to be weary of my existence—Perhaps this may move her: but then I must throw myself perpetually in her way that she may make me a perfect convert to her virtues. I will go frequently to Lord Hampton's, if only for the sake of talking of her to him, and to that pretty, little prude Kitty Percy, who has charms, I fancy, sufficient to make even a conquest of *you*. I do not, however, think that *you*, Walter, will ever be half so much enamoured as

your sincere friend,

E. EUSTON.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIII.

MISS PETWORTH TO MRS. BULLER.

I AM very sorry to hear that there are no hopes of your coming home, my dear Mrs. Buller—Still more am I concerned at the cause of your being detained where you are. I know too well the full value of a friend by finding one in *you*—I have, thanks to the attention of your good brother, recovered myself a little since my meeting Mr. Euston, but I have not been since at Lord Hampton's, as I find that he is continually there, and has entirely gained his Lordship, and Kitty also, to his side: I say little, therefore, to the latter, at present, on a subject that never was agreeable to me.

Kitty

Kitty has acquired a new set of ideas since her arrival in London. Lord Hampton is her idol, every thing *he* approves of is right. She is really so infatuated with him, that I should tremble for her, did I not see very clearly that my Lord behaves very properly to her, and gives her not the least reason to believe he looks upon her in any other light than as the daughter of his friend committed to his care. I wish, for her own sake, she could like Mr. Selwyn—It is, indeed, astonishing to me, that she does not, as he is perfectly amiable—Nothing but her prepossessions in favour of another can surely hinder her from accepting of him. Yet, as she *must* know that she cannot—ought not to think of *that other*, as she must see too, if she is not totally blind, that *he* would not, were he at liberty, make his addresses

to

MISS PETWORTH. 183

to *her*; I wonder she does not endeavour to look upon Selwyn in the light in which he must necessarily appear to every impartial, unprejudiced person.

I have lived in a very retired manner since you went away. There are few places in which I chuse to appear without *you*. There are still fewer people with whom I chuse to associate. Mr. Edwards thinks I shall be melancholy, merely for want of amusement—Yesterday, therefore, he proposed my making a party to see Garrick play Hamlet: but I sincerely told him that I knew nobody I chose to go with; as many of my acquaintance might be inclined to treat me with an impertinence to which I could not—to which I would not submit, and as others might not care to accompany me, on my own account,

count, after the treatment I had met with from Euston; adding, that the Miss Brindleys said I should run no small risque in venturing out at all, especially without my dear Mrs. Buller.

He replied, with a good-natured smile, quite natural to him, "Will you trust yourself with *me*, Miss Petworth?" "We may go into the green-boxes without any addition to our party."

I consented, as I thought that the proposal was made purely to oblige me; otherwise I am sure I should have declined it.

We went accordingly, and I was never more entertained in my life. I enjoyed the advantage of all Mr. Edwards's judicious observations, without the least inter-

MISS PETWORTH. 185

interruption, till towards the conclusion of the third act. Then hearing a little noise, I lifted up my eyes a moment from the scene before me, and saw Euston with *his* fixed upon our box.

He bowed respectfully and then looked down, as if fearful of displeasing: yet does not he sufficiently displease by being perpetually near me? By always throwing himself in my way, he not only puts me out of countenance, but continually brings to my memory things which I wish to forget. I became immediately tired of what had given me so much pleasure before—I made a proposal to Mr. Edwards to leave the house as soon as the play was over; but he, who guessed my reason for such a proposal, persuaded me rather to stay
till

186 THE HISTORY OF

till the entertainment was half over; adding, that we might then slip out unobserved. I complied with his request; yet no sooner were we in the passage, than Euston was after us, and kept close to us till Mr. Edwards put me into a chair. He then walked by the side of it to the door of your house, and when he saw Mr. Edwards—who had followed in another chair—lead me in, he bowed again and left us.

I went this morning to take a walk in the Green-Park with your brother. Euston pursued us, and affected to appear the very picture of despair. If he continues to haunt me in this manner, I must leave London, and bury myself in obscurity. Nothing but my concern at a separation from my dear
Mrs,

MISS PETWORTH. 187

Mrs. Buller, could any longer detain
here

her obliged and

truly affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

LETTER XXXIV.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

I GROW more and more dissatisfied
and unhappy. Miss Petworth was,
last night, at Hamlet. John, who had
orders to watch her motions, brought
me word that she was gone to the play
with only Mr. Edwards.

I followed them—They were in the
green boxes, and so deeply engaged in
con-

conversation with each other, that I was not discovered till the play was above half over. Miss Petworth then seeing me, seemed to be exceedingly displeased at my being there. I endeavoured to behave to her with the profoundest respect; but I was, at the same time, violently agitated by jealousy. I could not conquer my painful emotions; they forced me to follow her chair home—There I saw the happy Edwards hand her out of it; and they were the first objects I perceived in the Green-Park this morning. This Edwards, under the pretence of being her guardian, will find a thousand opportunities to insinuate himself into her favour, and the transition from *esteem* to a tenderer passion will be extremely easy. 'Tis no wonder that so charming a creature as *she* is, should make him overlook every thing; but
how

how can the delicate Hebe think of marrying one man when she has been out all night with another—for though nothing really passed that was improper, how can any man be sure that no improprieties *did* pass? But I suppose he will not mind that; she is chaste, and chaste she most certainly is; no wonder, therefore, that he is fond of her. Where can he meet with such another girl? And she seems to be—surprising as it may appear—actually fond of *him*. Why not, indeed? He is not old, and he is rather handsome; they say too he is a very entertaining companion when he can be brought to converse—He was violently attached to retirement before this fine creature fell in his way: *she* has drawn him out of it—He is very musical also—In short, he is, I find, but too agreeable for *my* peace. If she

mar-

190 THE HISTORY OF

marries him, I shall be distracted: I must watch all her motions and follow her every where—I have no rest but when I see her; I have not once seen her lately without this Edwards; yet I can only blame myself for my wrong conduct when I had her in my possession. But as there are so many abandoned women, especially so many married women who set no bounds to their licentiousness, can a man be so very censurable for trying the woman first with whom he desires to spend his days? I must, however, make this plea for the defence of my behaviour, and I think Miss Petworth may be satisfied with it. Having defeated my intentions, she may now, I imagine, abate somewhat of her rigour, and condescend to accept of
your sincere friend

E. EUSTON.

L E T.

LETTER XXXV.

MISS PETWORTH TO MRS. BULLER.

I Thank you for your kind letter, my dear friend, and also for your approbation of your brother's care of me; but tho' your hints were all well meant, be assured they were unnecessary, as he wants no prompting to treat me with the most obliging, the most delicate attention. Our *tête à têtes*, however, have been interrupted.

Kitty Percy, hurt by having kept me from calling on her as I used to do, for fear of meeting Euston, came to me yesterday morning, and with tears in her eyes, intreated me to forgive her

192 THE HISTORY OF

her if she had done amiss, in not endeavouring to hinder Euston from coming where I was, when she knew his coming was disagreeable to me.

I replied, that it was not only extremely disagreeable to me, but that it was scandalous to admit a man who had behaved in so unwarrantable a manner.

I then asked her whether she would have liked to have been served so herself, and whether she thought a woman could decently receive a man who had behaved infamously to her, with as much civility, as much pleasure, as if he had acted with the greatest propriety? adding however, that I did not blame her so much as I did Lord Hampton, who certainly knew better, and, consequently, should not have suffered her to encourage

rage a man who ought to be kept at a considerable distance. "My Lord," concluded I, "by taking Mr. Euston's part, has given me but a very indifferent opinion of him, and I would advise *you* to take care of *yourself*."

"Nay Hebe," cried she, with the colour mounting into her face, "have you not told me a great many times, that my Lord did not trouble himself about me? How then can I be in a dangerous situation?"

"I *did* tell you that he was quite indifferent about you," replied I, "and so he appears to be; but there are some men so artful, that they pretend to be insensible, at the very time they are contriving to destroy the virtue which they declaredly admire."

VOL. I.

K

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194 THE HISTORY OF

She looked abashed, but said, she believed that my Lord was not that sort of man; that she had seen no reason to alter her sentiments concerning him.

I told her, in return, that I hoped she never *would have* reason to alter them; adding, that I thought it better for her, notwithstanding all her prejudices in his Lordship's favour, to be happily settled with Mr. Selwyn, who, certainly could not have any bad designs, who bore an excellent character, and who was a very amiable man.

She sighed.

I proceeded to tell her, that she discovered no small indelicacy, by suffering herself to be so attached to a married man; and that though he did not
like

MISS PETWORTH. 195

like her, the world, from her indiscreet behaviour, might be too apt to suppose he had behaved improperly too: that Lady Hampton's being seldom seen with her, and taking little notice of her, could not but confirm their suspicions, to which she would be exposed by persevering in her refusal of Mr. Selwyn, and by her perpetual appearance with her guardian.

As I really spoke with a sincere design to preserve her from the danger which I had myself fortunately escaped, sincerely wishing, at the same time, to promote her happiness, I spoke with an affectionate warmth, and it moved her—it melted her.

When I had done, she came and kissed my cheek; and wetting it with her

innocent tears, said, "I thank you, my
 " dear Hebe; I am sure you have my
 " honour, my happiness at heart, and I
 " will endeavour to follow your advice
 " whatever it may cost me; but you
 " must give me a little time—I must
 " stay till Mr. Selwyn revives a subject
 " which he has, at my earnest request,
 " for a good while laid aside. I cannot
 " think of mentioning it myself. If
 " *he* speaks of it, I hope I shall be ca-
 " pable of acting agreeably to *your*
 " wishes for my happiness."

I then turned the conversation to
 something which I thought would be
 more amusing: but she seemed to have
 too great a weight upon her spirits to
 join in it. She soon afterwards left me.

When I was alone, I began to reflect
 on what I had said to Kitty, and was
 afraid

MISS PETWORTH. 197

afraid I had been too severe. She looked so pitiful, and so distressed, that I almost wished I had been silent; though what I spoke was with the best intention in the world—She is so gentle, that I cannot help feeling for her. Would she could have the man she loves! But that is impossible. We ought not, I see, to set our hearts on any thing. How foolishly did I imagine that I should be happy with Euston! What a vain supposition! Was it possible for me to be happy with a man who could seduce me from *him* who had a right to protect me? Sir Thomas, indeed, abused the power with which my father vested him; but I could always have applied to the Court of Chancery for redress. How great was the folly I committed, when I complied with Euston's indelicate proposal! 'Tis no wonder that *he*

198 THE HISTORY OF

has, that every man should have, a bad opinion of me, and imagine me the most ready, the most willing, of my sex. A man can only judge by experience. When he finds a girl disposed to throw herself, in a manner, into his arms, who can blame him for taking advantage of the encouragement given him?—I am quite sick with thinking on the ridiculous part I have acted, and nothing but the extreme friendliness of Mr. Edwards, and of his excellent sister, can make *her* life tolerable, who, with all her imperfections and indiscretions, will ever remain

your most obliged

and affectionate friend,

HEBE PETWORTH.

L E T.

LETTER XXXVI.

EDWARD EUSTON, Esq. to
SIR WALTER CAREY, Bart.

I AM jealous, to a degree beyond description, of my charming Hebe. 'Tis very clear to *me* that Edwards loves *her*; and who can say that she either does not, or will not love *him*? I am tormented with this idea—Can I bear to see the girl who was so near being mine in the arms of another? Impossible! I must have her or die. My constant uneasiness upon this occasion, has, I find, affected my health. I feel an inward heat, I feel myself in a continual fever. I have slept very little;

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I have

I have taken very little nourishment a great while. Our friend Adams tells me, that if I don't take care, I shall soon be out of the reach of medicine. No matter—I had better die than live in a state of perpetual anxiety. Yet, I confess, I shall be loth to leave the world without calling Hebe mine. Possibly, when she sees me worn to a mere shadow, she may relent; she will then, perhaps, be convinced of the sincerity of my repentance. It will then be time enough for me to leave her mistress of every thing in my power, though the sooner this happens the better, as I shall be the sooner out of my pain. She sits whole hours with the happy Edwards, singing to his harpsichord. What transports will he experience by having been able to command his passions! However, on second thoughts, he is most likely to be possesst

MISS PETWORTH. 201

possest of no passions at all ; and will not, consequently, be in the least elated with his felicity. Hebe found *me* too warm a lover ; she may find *him* as much too cool a one, when it is too late to change : but there is no persuading her to be kind to, not even to pity,

your greatly disquieted,

but very sincere friend,

E. EUSTON.

LETTER XXXVII.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

I HAVE done what you desired, my dear Hebe ; yet I will be honest ; I will confess to you that my Lord, by pressing me earnestly upon the same subject, when I returned home from

K 5

you,

you, effectually convinced me that what I have long believed is true, and that, were *he* at liberty this moment, he would not think of *me*. The last consideration gave an additional strength to your arguments. By feeling myself an object of indifference in the eyes of such a man, I, of course, feel myself a very imperfect creature—I ought to think myself highly honoured by Mr. Selwyn's notice—but why must I marry at all? there is no necessity for it; only my Lord, says that Mr. Selwyn is miserable, from being unable to inspire me with a reciprocal passion. I can truly say, I am sorry to make any person wretched: but I do not see how I can render him happy, as I cannot feel any of those raptures with which *his* breast, he tells me, is agitated on *my* account. I was, however, so very civil to him last night,

that

that I could perceive, in a moment, he began to form new hopes, and I encouraged him to believe that he was not mistaken—But if you knew how much it cost me, my dear Hebe, you would pity me. I must, indeed, so far do justice to Mr. Selwyn, as to confess that he behaved with the utmost delicacy. When he was gone, my Lord told me that I had been a very good girl; adding, that I had put Selwyn into such high spirits, he did not know what to do with himself. “He was “actually,” continued he, “afraid of “taking advantage of your condescension—I saw him tremble when he “touched you.”

Would you believe it, Hebe? my Lord's manner of speaking of his friend affected me more than any thing

which *that* friend could say in his own favour. What an insinuating lover my Lord would make to the woman he was truly fond of! I think I have heard you say that he never was actually in love; I mean that he never singled out a woman; he has always been the person chosen. No wonder—but I must not proceed on a subject already too interesting.

Come to me, my dear friend, and assist me in keeping up the resolution I have made. Believe me, at the same time, to remain ever

your affectionate

C. PERCY.

L E T.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Mr. SELWYN to Lord HAMPTON.

TWICE did I call on you to day,
to vent the raptures with which my
heart overflows at the delightful change
in Miss Percy's behaviour; a change
which made me tremble while I enjoyed
it, lest I might have said or done any
thing, inadvertently, to lessen the ad-
vantage I seem to have gained; lest she
should have been alarmed at my mak-
ing the most delicate advances, and
have been apprehensive of my proceed-
ing too fast. I am at this instant, tho'
I have the greatest reason to be charmed
with her, afraid of expressing my ten-
derness, lest it should give disgust to
the

206 THE HISTORY OF

the person whom I most wish to please. I would not, designedly, give her a moment's uneasiness for the universe. I have, therefore, lately declined speaking to her on a subject which is continually uppermost in my mind. I have even avoided paying her those little compliments to which, I think, she is so justly entitled, and which are frequently paid indiscriminately to all women, for fear of being thought too pushing, and a flatterer. Of all characters, I detest a flatterer; besides, I cannot flatter the woman whom I so sincerely love. She has, in *my* eyes, a thousand attractions, which may not be obvious to him who beholds her with indifference: if any man, indeed, *can* with indifference behold her; can behold the innocence strongly expressed in her pleasing countenance, and the

sim-

simplicity of her manners, without feeling his heart touched.

When you left us last night, as I had, deviating from my usual forbearance, commended the soft white hand and arm employed in presenting the tea to me, I was afraid of trusting myself in a conversation with her, lest I should have said something to alarm her, and therefore, taking up a book, asked her, if I should read any thing to her, as I saw she had got her work.

She replied, that she should be glad to hear me read *Elfrida*, as it was performed at Covent-Garden Theatre.

Animated by a request so very agreeable to me, I took up that most elegant dramatic poem she had mentioned.

tioned. I was quite charmed with the fine taste which she discovered, and had soon reason to be doubly transported by her tenderness. The tears of sensibility flowed fast down her lovely cheeks in large drops, and I longed to kiss the sweet eyes from which they streamed. I longed most earnestly to kiss them, but I was afraid of disgusting her. I would not have vexed her for the world. I could not, however, read another line. I could not help throwing down the book. Grasping her hands, I told her that I loved her charming tenderness, but that I could not bring myself to draw another tear from her sympathetic eyes.

Lifting up those sympathetic eyes, with the most enchanting smile, she said, "I am glad you are not displeased, Mr. Selwyn,

"Selwyn, with my being so much
"moved with the affecting passages
"you have read to me."

"Displeased with you, my angel!"
answered I, unable to conceal the tran-
sports which her fears occasioned; "Dis-
"pleased with you! It is impossible—
"How could you think so?"

"Why," replied she, "a great many
"gentlemen find fault with our tears.
"I have heard some say that it is foolish
"to shed tears; and I have seen several
"laugh at a tragedy which made half
"the women in the house weep."

"No man would ever laugh at you,
"my dear Miss Percy," said I.

"You

210 THE HISTORY OF

"You are too partial to me, Mr. Selwyn," answered she; "but I am glad you can bear to see me sad. I may then indulge a pleasing melancholy, that is, at certain seasons, more desirable than mirth."

What a hint was this of her intending to be mine, conveyed in the most innocently-delightful manner! Yet how amiably fearful was she of giving offence at the same time!

"I shall then be blest with you at last," cried I, "my dear, captivating creature!" throwing my arm round her, pressing her to my throbbing bosom, and ravishing a glowing kiss from her pretty mouth. She struggled a little, but I hope she was not much offended. I hastened to assure her that she should

should be indulged with the gratification of every wish of her heart ; and that it should be gratified even before it was declared, if it were possible for me to guess at it. Concluding, with telling her, in the strongest terms, that I would fly to procure her every kind of satisfaction ; and that I could not know any joy when she was not as happy as she desired, as she deserved to be.

She blushed, threw down her pretty eyes, thanked me, and then begged me to take up the book again.

I obeyed. She made so many judicious observations, discovered so much taste for poetry, and expressed the pleasure my reading had given her in such obliging terms, that if I had not loved her before, I must have now doated on her,

her. Guess, therefore, my Lord, how impatient I was to make you acquainted with this transporting, yet unexpected dawn of happiness to

your faithful

J. SELWYN.

LETTER XXXIX.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

YOU are a good girl, Kitty, as my Lord says; now I like you—you *must* be happy with Mr. Selwyn. A man with his strong sense, tenderness, and delicacy, cannot fail to make you happy by and by, though you may not think so just at present. I begin to fancy that there is not so much difficulty in

in changing the object of one's affection as I had imagined: but my dear Mrs. Buller is come home again, and her arrival has put me into the best humour in the world. I went, last night, at her earnest request, to Ranelagh—She *will* insist upon my appearing in public, and I am disposed to think that she is in the right. We were accompanied by Mr. Edwards, who paid me great respect, and the people really looked as if they believed me to be innocent—I was, however, greatly disconcerted by Euston: he followed our little party, but at a decent distance, all the evening. He looks very pale and thin. Colonel Fane, a friend of Mr. Edwards's, told me, in a whisper, that he was in a decline. I am not altogether of the Colonel's opinion, though he is, to be sure, prodigiously altered. The Colonel

214 THE HISTORY OF

nel was lively and amusing. I thought so, at least, because I was, myself, in higher spirits than usual. There is a considerable satisfaction in being under the protection of a man of strict honour. We are not, indeed, safe with any other men. I speak from experience.

You will tell me, perhaps, my Kitty, that any man, in Euston's situation, would have taken advantage of it. I was unquestionably very indiscreet in giving *him* such an advantage over me; but I cannot think that every man would have behaved as *he* did. With regard to *Selwyn* in particular, it is my sincere opinion that you may very safely trust to *his* honour; and that you may soon be happily united to him, is the sincere wish of

your ever affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

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LETTER XL.

From the SAME to the SAME.

SINCE I wrote the above, I have heard the strangest piece of news—I shall be very sorry to hear it confirmed, as it will only make me more talked of than ever.

Euston hearing a Mr. Prideaux speak of me in a slighting manner at Ranelagh, called him out after I was gone, and insisted upon a recantation; but not being able to procure *that*, nor any other satisfaction from him, he kicked him about the gardens, to the no small diversion of the company, who had, it seems, before the degrading correction

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he received, a poor opinion of him. He is, I am told, an egregious coxcomb.

Mrs. Buller says that I am obliged to Mr. Euston for commencing my champion: but *I* do not say so—I rather think that the less I am mentioned the better, as I cannot be entirely cleared of the aspersions which I have merited, in some measure; though I am certain I do not deserve all that may be said about me. The speaking of one thing naturally introduces another. A woman's reputation is so extremely tender that even the breath of well-meant friendship is sometimes unfavourable to it. I could wish then that Euston would take no farther notice of me; he can never repair the injury he has already done me, but he may very much increase

MISS PETWORTH. 217

increase it. I write instead of calling on you, as I had intended this morning, lest I should meet *him* whom I ever desire to avoid.

I am, however,

yours, with my usual
affection and sincerity,

HEBE PETWORTH.

P. S. If Euston persists in following me every where, I must shut myself up, or retire into the country.

LETTER XLI.

MISS PERCY TO MISS PETWORTH.

I HAVE taken up my pen, though I know it is in vain, to plead the cause of Euston : yet you *must* hear me,
VOL. I. L my

218 THE HISTORY OF

my dear Hebe ; you *must* hear the sentiments which people of the first understanding (people of whose judgment in other respects you have no mean opinion) entertain of this affair.

Mr. Euston, who came here this morning, does, by no means, attempt to vindicate himself, with regard to his behaviour to you upon the journey. He freely confesses the impropriety, the indelicacy of his conduct, and only thinks it hard that a sincere repentance should not be followed by a pardon on your side. As to his behaviour at Ranelagh, he does not imagine that it can justly be blamed. " I should ever," said he, " have looked upon myself as the
 " meanest of men, if I had tamely heard
 " the woman whom I adore scandalously
 " aspersed, in spite of her unremitting
 " cruelty

MISS PETWORTH. 239

"cruelty to me; if I had not obliged
"the man, presumptuous enough to in-
"sult her, either publicly to retract
"his words, or to prove himself an in-
"famous rascal by his cowardice."

This is the defence which Mr. Euston has made, my dear, to Lord Hampton and to Mr. Selwyn; and they both think that, in the last affair, he has acted quite like a man of honour—Were you to *see* him, you would *pity* him, if not forgive him. He looks like a mere shadow, and declares, that since there are no hopes of obtaining your hand, he only wishes for an end to the misery which he endures, by a speedy dissolution. Lord Hampton and Mr. Selwyn feel the greatest concern and compassion for him; they think that he has suffered full enough, and that, how-

ever he has offended, he has, even by his improper behaviour, so much contributed to the raising of your character, as to leave you no excuse for refusing any longer to accept of his hand. He is very much afraid, indeed, that the inclination you once felt for him is transferred to another man: and, indeed, I begin to think his apprehensions not entirely groundless: I have assured him, however, that I am quite ignorant of any such change in your sentiments. Consider a little, my dear Hebe, before you doom this poor man, who fondly doats on you, I believe, to perpetual unhappiness in this world, or to a speedy removal to another.

I am

most affectionately yours,

C. PERCY.

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LETTER XLII.

Mr. EUSTON to Sir WALTER CAREY.

THE difficulties I meet with in trying to procure Miss Petworth's pardon, and to make her reconciled to me, increase every hour. I have long thought, indeed, my efforts would be ineffectual: I am now certain they will never be successful. Yet, however angry she may be with me, she is still dear to me; so dear to me, indeed, that I shall studiously endeavour to preserve her reputation; that reputation which I have not, though I have sullied it, destroyed. I am now determined to defend it at the hazard of my life—

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222 THE HISTORY OF

I can only by such a conduct repair the injury I have done her, as she will not permit me to spend the remainder of *my* days in perpetual attempts to render *hers* completely happy. I flatter myself that I am capable of making her happy, would she consent to receive me, the sincerest of penitents, into favour again: but it is impossible to convince her that she carries her severity too far. She was right in discovering resentment at the impropriety of my behaviour: but is she right in keeping up that resentment, when she has the greatest reason to believe that my repentance is unfeigned? To be offended with me for having punished an infamous fellow, who publicly traduced her, is cruelty beyond expression. I cannot, will not, tamely stand and hear her vilified, especially when I well know that every reflection upon
her

MISS PETWORTH. 223

her character originates from the imprudence of my conduct. Her sentiments upon this occasion are, surely, too refined. I am very sensible that my dear girl's delicacy is deeply wounded, in consequence of what has passed between us, and I *feel* for her; yet I will not hear her slandered—She is an angel in every respect—Had you seen her that night at Ranelagh!—she was the most elegant figure there---I cannot describe the beautiful colouring, which gave an additional spirit to her complexion, when her charming eyes met mine by accident. She is not only more lovely in my eyes, but more dear to me than ever: and so I have, at last, brought her friend, the gentle, amiable Miss Percy, to believe; who has kindly undertaken---urged also by Lord Hampton and Mr. Selwyn---both men of the
first

224 THE HISTORY OF

first understandings, and of the greatest candour, to plead for me. In compliance with my earnest intreaties, and with their entire approbation, Miss Percy has wrote to Hebe. She prettily told me that both the gentlemen looked over her letter, and approved of it-- May not some lenity be expected? But I am almost afraid that all our united efforts will be unavailing.

Adieu.

E. EUSTON.

LETTER XLIII.

Miss PETWORTH to Miss PERCY.

YOUR last letter, Kitty. is so different from any of your former ones, that you had no occasion to tell me

MISS PETWORTH. 225

me I must hear the sentiments of people of the first understanding. I have already heard all that can be said upon that subject, and immediately knew the style of Lord Hampton and Mr. Selwyn, though written by the hand, and signed with the name of Miss Percy. You are, certainly, my dear, going to commence Amazon, for you have entirely lost that modesty and simplicity of expression which was so pleasing, and have adopted the mode of writing peculiar to the opposite sex, as you make use of words seldom or ever written by a lady. You confess, indeed, they are the very words of Mr. Euston, so that your letter was not dictated by my gentle, innocent Kitty, but by her three before-mentioned friends. However, as I am not in the least disposed to reply in the same language; as I am
not,

226 THE HISTORY, &c.

not, indeed, capable of replying in such a manner, having no men by me who think themselves possessors of the first understandings, for prompters, I must decline keeping up a correspondence of this nature : but I shall be always equally ready and willing to renew, and to continue that from which I before found great pleasure with my dear Kitty—I am still, and ever shall remain,

her affectionate

HEBE PETWORTH.

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